Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Issue 86 (November 2004)

# OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

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## METAL GEAR SOLID 3
## SNAKE EATER

NOV. 2004 ISSUE 86
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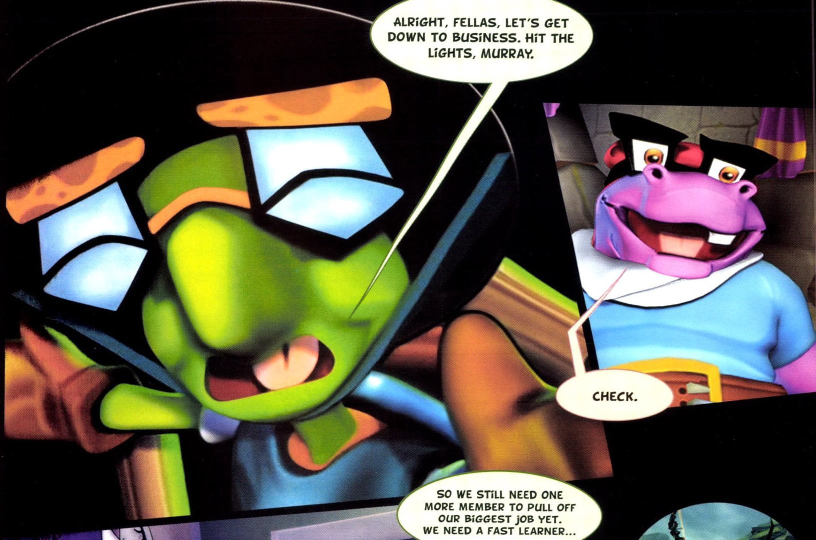
ALRIGHT, FELLAS, LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS. HIT THE LIGHTS, MURRAY.
CHECK.
SO WE STILL NEED ONE MORE MEMBER TO PULL OFF OUR BIGGEST JOB YET. WE NEED A FAST LEARNER...

EVERYONE

E

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Comic Violence

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WITH QUICK REFLEXES.
WHO CAN THINK ON THEIR FEET...
AND SOMEONE WITH A PLAYSTATION 2.
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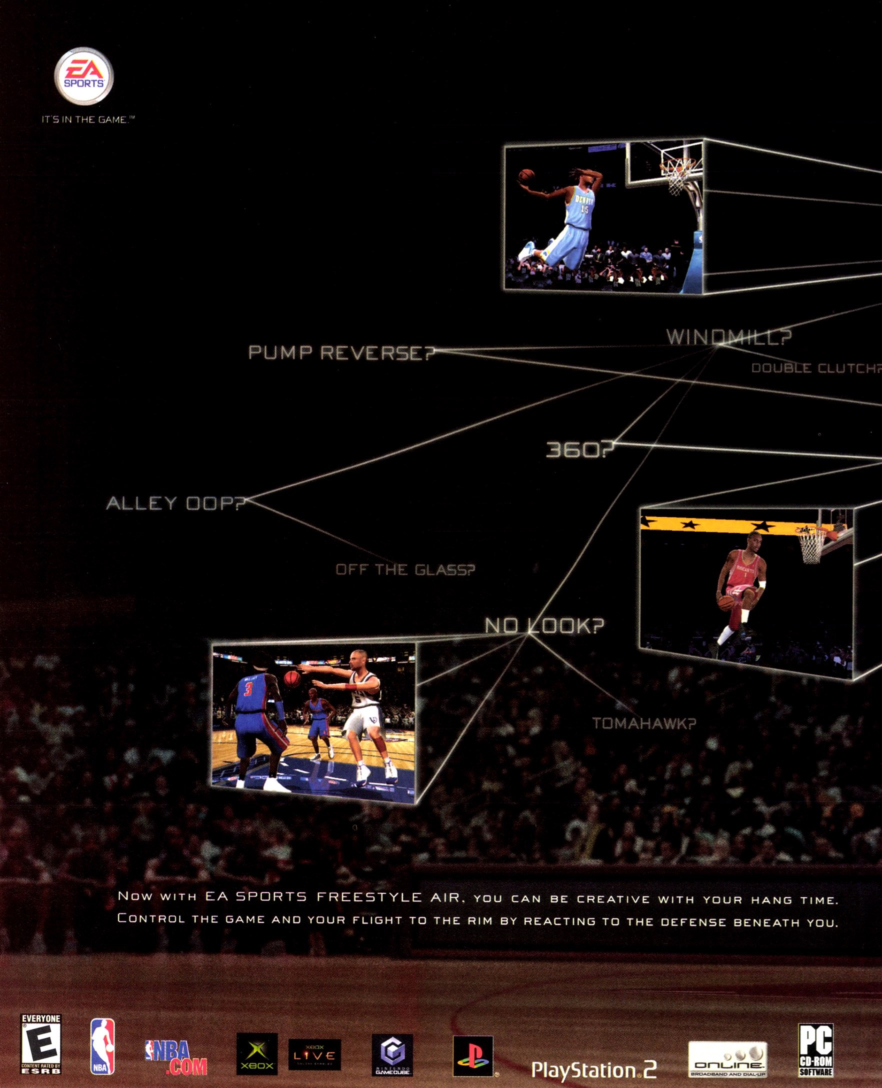
PUMP REVERSE?
WINDMILL?
DOUBLE CLUTCH?
360?
ALLEY OOP?
OFF THE GLASS?
NO LOOK?
TOMAHAWK?

Now with EA SPORTS FREESTYLE AIR, you can be creative with your hang time. Control the game and your flight to the rim by reacting to the defense beneath you.

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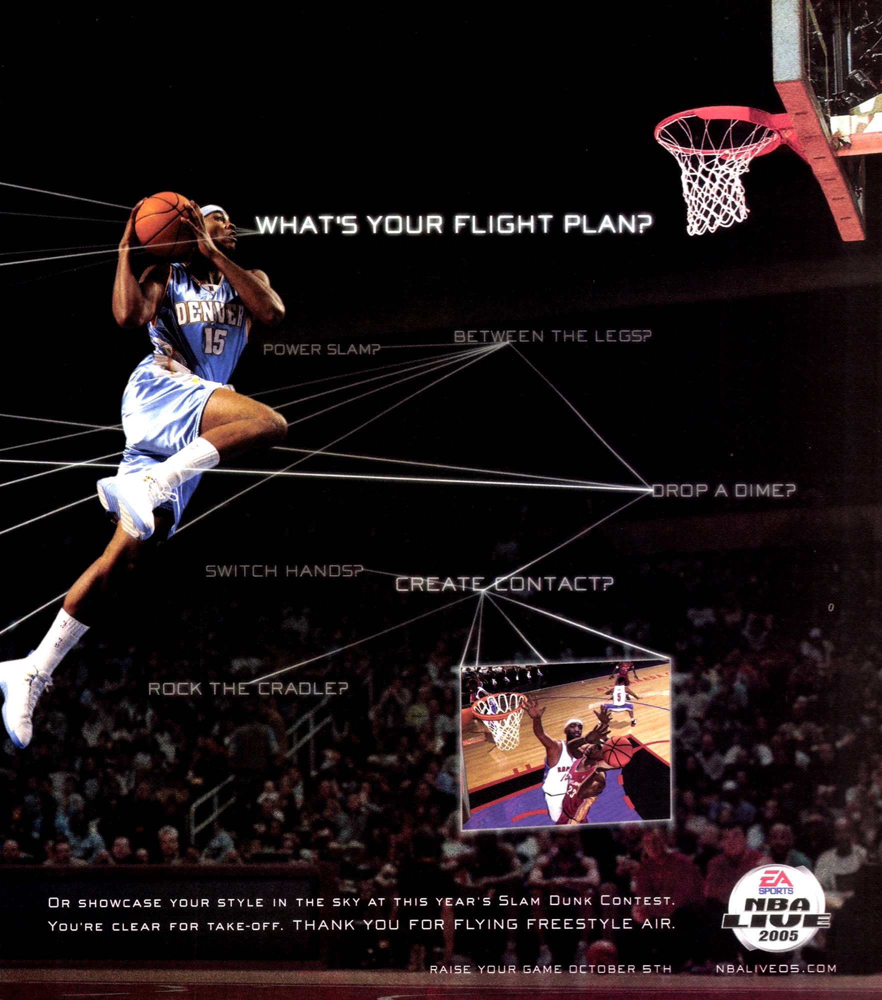
WHAT'S YOUR FLIGHT PLAN?
POWER SLAM?
BETWEEN THE LEGS?
DROP A DIME?
SWITCH HANDS?
CREATE CONTACT?
ROCK THE CRADLE?
OR SHOWCASE YOUR STYLE IN THE SKY AT THIS YEAR'S SLAM DUNK CONTEST.
YOU'RE CLEAR FOR TAKE-OFF. THANK YOU FOR FLYING FREESTYLE AIR.
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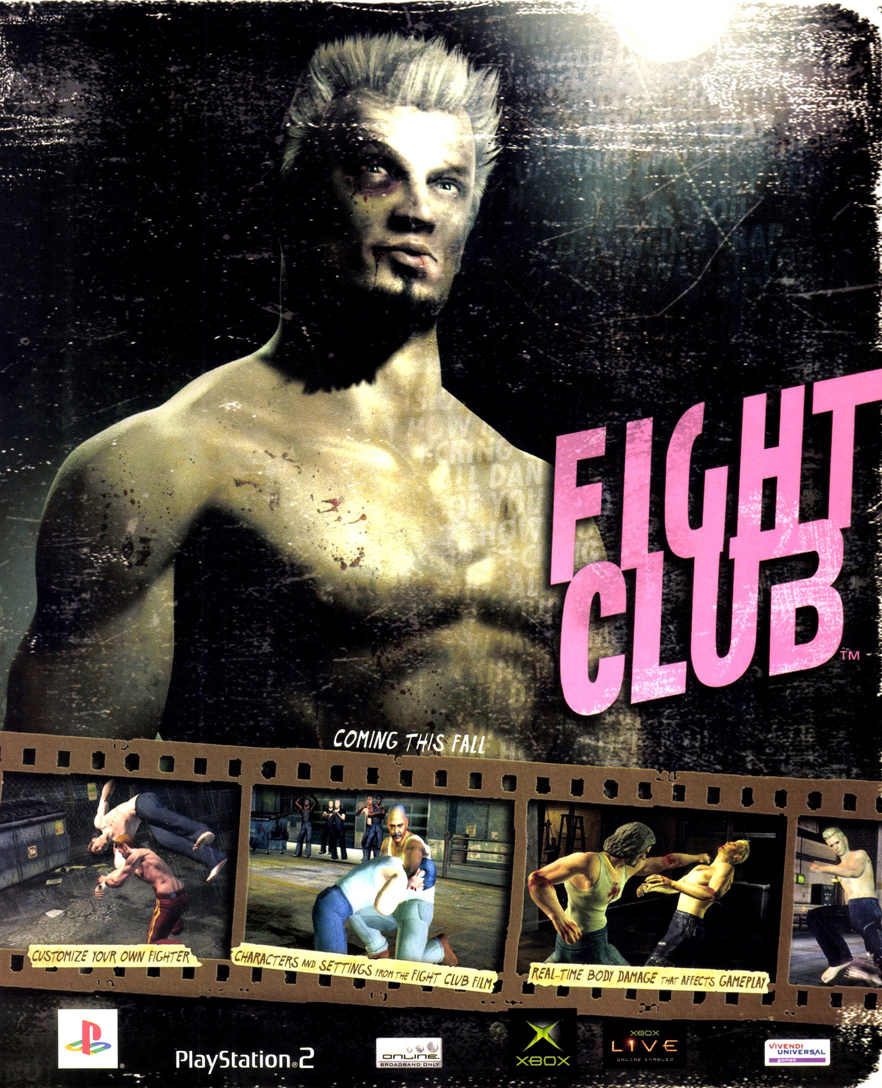

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# GET IN

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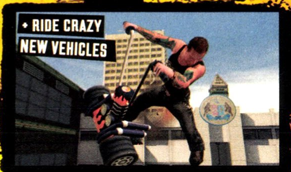
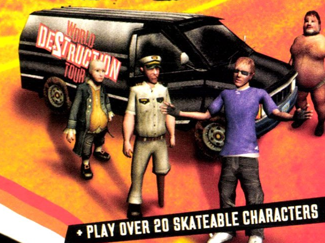
CREATE-A-GRAPHIC
TOOLS
CANVAS
SELECT GRAPHIC
ERASE LAYER
TRANSFORM LAYER
FLIP HORIZONTALLY
FLIP VERTICALLY
SWAP BACKWARD
SWAP FORWARD
COPY TO OPEN LAYER

+ LEAVE YOUR MARK



+ RIDE CRAZY NEW VEHICLES



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TEEN

T

Blood
Crude Humor
Language
Suggestive Themes
Use of Alcohol
Violence

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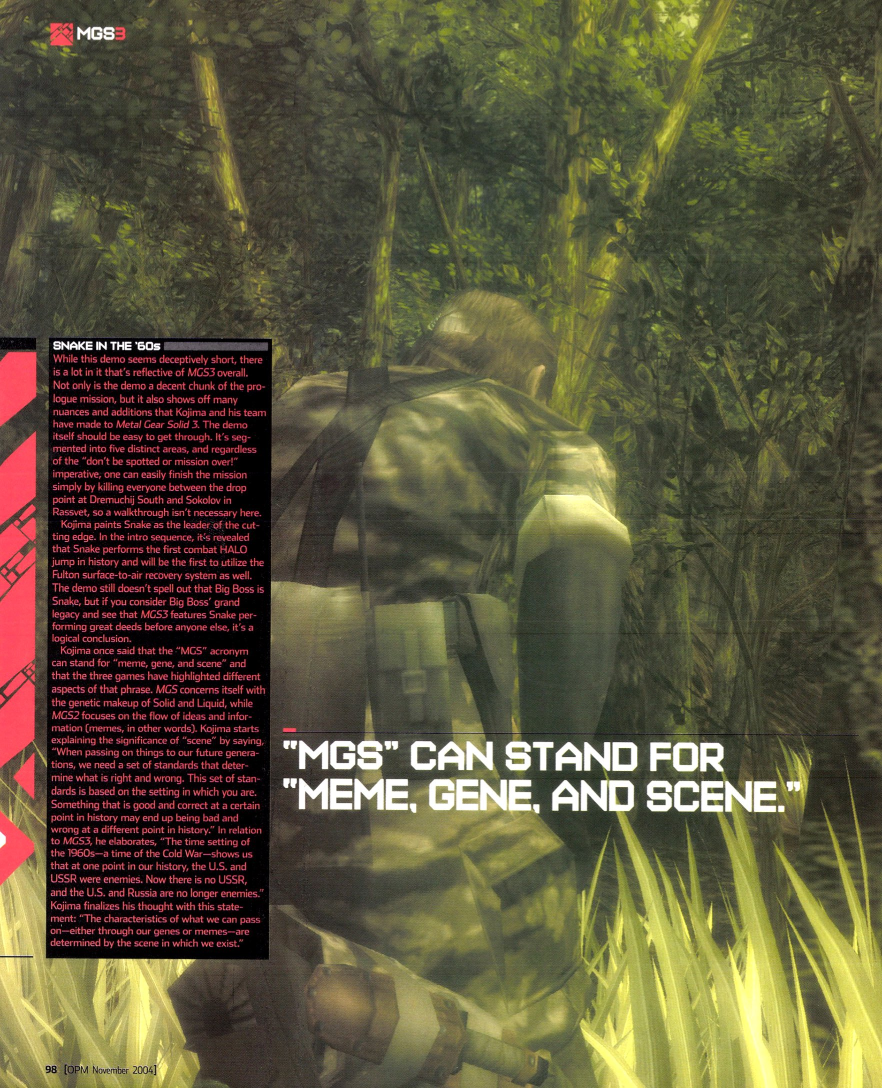


## SNAKE IN THE '60s

While this demo seems deceptively short, there is a lot in it that's reflective of *MGS3* overall. Not only is the demo a decent chunk of the prologue mission, but it also shows off many nuances and additions that Kojima and his team have made to *Metal Gear Solid 3*. The demo itself should be easy to get through. It's segmented into five distinct areas, and regardless of the "don't be spotted or mission over!" imperative, one can easily finish the mission simply by killing everyone between the drop point at Dremuchij South and Sokolov in Rassvet, so a walkthrough isn't necessary here.

Kojima paints Snake as the leader of the cutting edge. In the intro sequence, it's revealed that Snake performs the first combat HALO jump in history and will be the first to utilize the Fulton surface-to-air recovery system as well. The demo still doesn't spell out that Big Boss is Snake, but if you consider Big Boss' grand legacy and see that *MGS3* features Snake performing great deeds before anyone else, it's a logical conclusion.

Kojima once said that the "MGS" acronym can stand for "meme, gene, and scene" and that the three games have highlighted different aspects of that phrase. *MGS* concerns itself with the genetic makeup of Solid and Liquid, while *MGS2* focuses on the flow of ideas and information (memes, in other words). Kojima starts explaining the significance of "scene" by saying, "When passing on things to our future generations, we need a set of standards that determine what is right and wrong. This set of standards is based on the setting in which you are. Something that is good and correct at a certain point in history may end up being bad and wrong at a different point in history." In relation to *MGS3*, he elaborates, "The time setting of the 1960s—a time of the Cold War—shows us that at one point in our history, the U.S. and USSR were enemies. Now there is no USSR, and the U.S. and Russia are no longer enemies." Kojima finalizes his thought with this statement: "The characteristics of what we can pass on—either through our genes or memes—are determined by the scene in which we exist."

"MGS" CAN STAND FOR "MEME, GENE, AND SCENE."

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

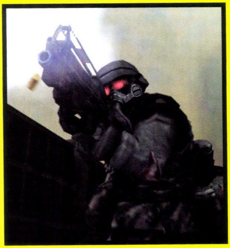
# METAL GEAR SOLID 3
## SNAKE EATER

**AREA 51**

**SILENT HILL 4**
THE ROOM

PLUS! NEO CONTRA • ROBOTECH: INVASION • TAK 2: THE STAFF OF DREAMS • NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2 • AND MUCH MORE

**BONUS!**



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DVD ROM

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM RATING PENDING TO MATURE
RP-M
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### PLAYABLES

- Metal Gear Solid 3:
  - Snake Eater
- Area 51
- Silent Hill 4:
  - The Room
- Neo Contra
- Robotech: Invasion
- Tak 2:
  - The Staff of Dreams
- Need for Speed Underground 2
- Crash Twinsanity
- Fight Club
- Ratchet & Clank:
  - Up Your Arsenal
- Ghost in the Shell:
  - Stand Alone Complex
- Monster Hunter

### VIDEOS

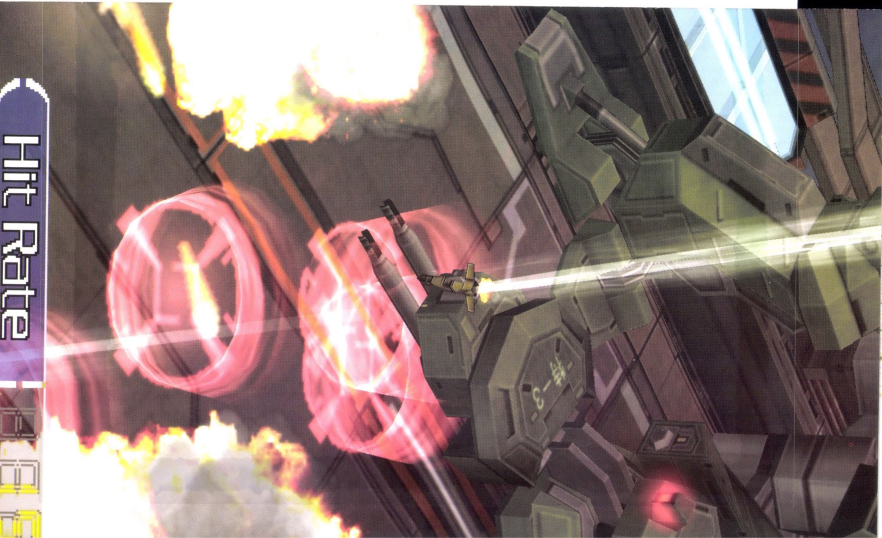
- ATV Offroad Fury 3
- Killzone at E3
- Ratchet and Clank:
  - Up Your Arsenal
- Call of Duty
- Making of Anti Grav

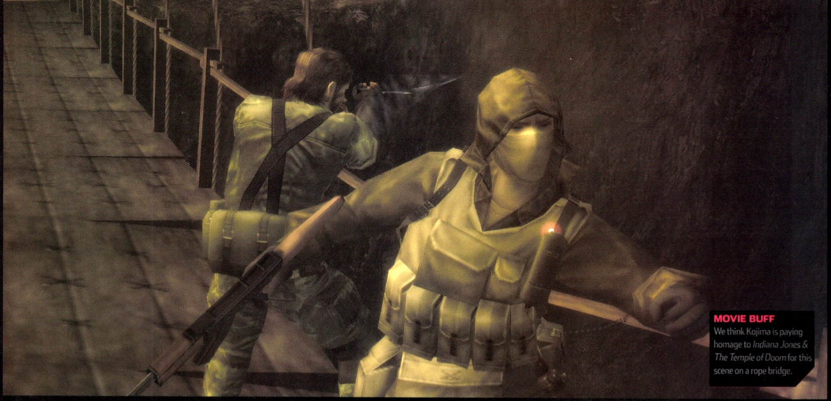
### INSIDE THE GAME

- SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs
  - Boot camp, part 2

### EXTRAS

- Gran Turismo 4
  - Online features





**MOVIE BUFF**
We think Kojima is paying homage to *Indiana Jones & The Temple of Doom* for this scene on a rope bridge.

## FOOD

Snake doesn't use military rations anymore—everything he eats is on-site and alive. Here's a quick rundown of most of the victuals you can hunt for in the demo, as well as their usefulness and ease of procurement. Every time Snake eats one, he'll make some sort of remark about how good the food was. Snake's nigh-orgasmic joy at eating a chunk of alligator is a bit odd, and not something we expect David Hayter to mimic when he does his round of recording sessions for the American version.

### RETICULATED PYTHON

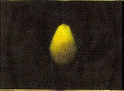
These guys are everywhere and provide a decent stamina boost. Use your night-vision goggles to find them slinking around in the grass, then either tranquilize or knife them. You don't even need to expand your jaw to some enormous size in order to eat these guys!

### RUSSIAN OYSTER MUSHROOM

There are actually two kinds of mushrooms, but you can't really tell the difference between them until you put them in your backpack. These ones are scattered around all over the place so they're easy to find if you run out of food. You get a mild stamina boost from eating these.

### SIBERIAN INK CAP

The first food item in the game. Right after you land, you'll find some mushrooms at the root of the tree in front of you. Just cut them down with your knife and munch on them for a small stamina boost. Technically, not as good as the Russian Oyster Mushroom.



### GOLOVA

There are a couple of these in the trees in Dremuchij Swampland (north of the swamp). Note that there's one lying on the ground, but oddly, you can't pick it up. Like most other items in trees, you just need to shoot it down with something. Offers a medium stamina increase.

### YABLOKO MOLOKO

There's an apple (?) tree with two apples (?) in Dolinovodno. This provides an okay boost (not as good as either an alligator or even a golova). Guards will notice the apples falling, so you can actually use them as a distraction. While they're looking at it, pop 'em in the back of the head.

### GIANT ANACONDA

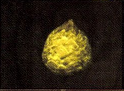
There's only one of these, and he's found in Dremuchij South. As far the demo is concerned, the giant anaconda has little difference from the python. Provides a high stamina increase. Be glad he didn't just finish eating a wild pig or something, or he might have been too heavy for you.

### TREE FROG

You'll see these guys the most; they're everywhere. They're also pretty damn small, so they might be a bit tricky to actually run out and catch. Even if you use a small pistol to kill them, it looks like the bullet tears them in half. You'll need to use thermal vision to see these little buggers.

### INDIAN GAVIAL

A big ol' alligator that serves up three rations. You can't capture one alive; if you tranq it, it merely falls asleep and doesn't become a cage like other animals do. These provide a medium to high stamina increase (you get three rations per gator). Use the shotgun to take them out.



### HORNETS' NEST

You'll find a couple of these around, and they're both good food and a decent distraction for enemies. Snipe them from a distance, otherwise the angry hornets will converge on you. They only bother people, as other animals don't react to a bunch of angry hornets buzzing around.

### MAGPIE

The hardest animal to hunt. There're only a couple of them, and you need to use either the sniper rifle or be a really good shot with the tranq gun in first person. This bird provides a medium stamina increase. There's a similar type of bird hanging out on the roof of Rassvet.

### RAT

There's a whole bunch of these guys crawling underneath the building where Sokolov is. Just stab at 'em and eat away. Their wee size and resultant wee stamina increase means that it's not even worth wasting a tranquilizer dart on. They don't even try to bite you!

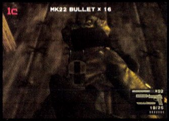
# CQC

Close-Quarters Combat (CQC) is one of the big additions to *MGS3*, and it makes combat significantly more interesting. Basically, you need to equip a CQC-capable weapon (for now, either just the knife, the knife and tranq pistol, the knife and regular pistol, or even your bare hands) and use Circle. How you use Circle determines what kind of CQC move you use.

Press ○ to execute a basic CQC. If you're in front of your target, you'll usually slam him to the ground, knocking him out instantly. You can either leave him there or put a bullet into him to make sure he doesn't get up.

If you press ○ while sneaking up from behind, you usually grab the enemy from behind. Now, you can:

**1a** Push forward on the stick and press ○ to shove him to the ground.
**1b** While he's on the ground, pull out your gun and aim down.
**1c** This causes the poor soul to get scared and start giving up goods to you.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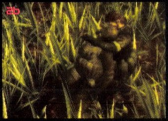
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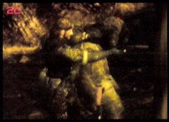
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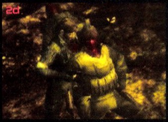
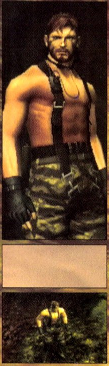

2d

**2a** Hold down ○ to hold onto the chump. Then...
**2b** ...hit L3 to interrogate him.
**2c** Hit □ to pull out your pistol and use him as a human shield. Other guards will not fire on you.
**2d** Slice his throat by holding down ○ another time.

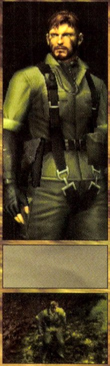
# CAMOUFLAGE

Snake has a lot more hiding tricks up his sleeve. No longer content with merely ducking into alcoves or underneath things, Snake can now blend in with his surroundings. Just hit Start and use the Camouflage menu to check out, and switch to, the appropriate camouflage. Here's a handy guide to the camouflage patterns and when they're useful to apply. Don't forget to apply face makeup as well.



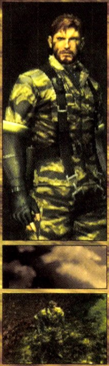
### NAKED

You can use this as some sort of badassness indicator when you're playing the demo in front of friends. Naked has no benefit, which means that you stick out like a sore thumb. Good for Rambo fans.



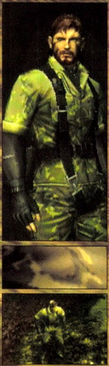
### OLIVE DRAB

Your default camo. It kind of blends in with the trees and the leaves, but doesn't do a great job. But it's still significantly better than being shirtless. At least it kind of matches the scenery around you.



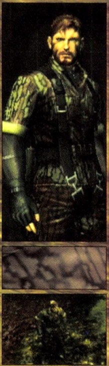
### TIGER STRIPE

Decent for laying low in the grass (similar to actual tigers blending into the grass). Does an OK job on the bridge. Use this in the numerous grass patches throughout the demo.



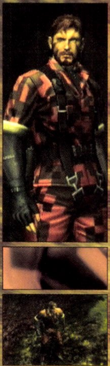
### LEAF

As the name implies, best with leafy areas. Probably the camo you'll use the most, as it matches with pretty much all of the wilderness that comes up before the wrecked base. Good all-around pattern.



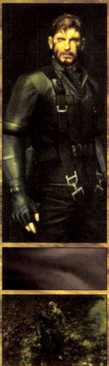
### TREE BARK

Best used for when you're pressed up against a tree; your camo index can shoot up to 95 percent, and most guards will just whiz by you on patrol, letting you sneak up and slash some necks.



### SQUARES

This looks like a bunch of red bricks...which is what the abandoned factory at Rassvet is made of. While it's perfect to use in that location, it's pretty useless for the rest of the demo.

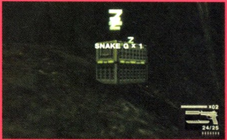


### BLACK

Better than Olive Drab but not as good as Leaf. OK for poorly lit areas as well, but in general, stick to using an actual pattern instead of a solid color like this or Olive Drab. It does look pretty cool.

## DEMO PREDATION

How to "live in predation"



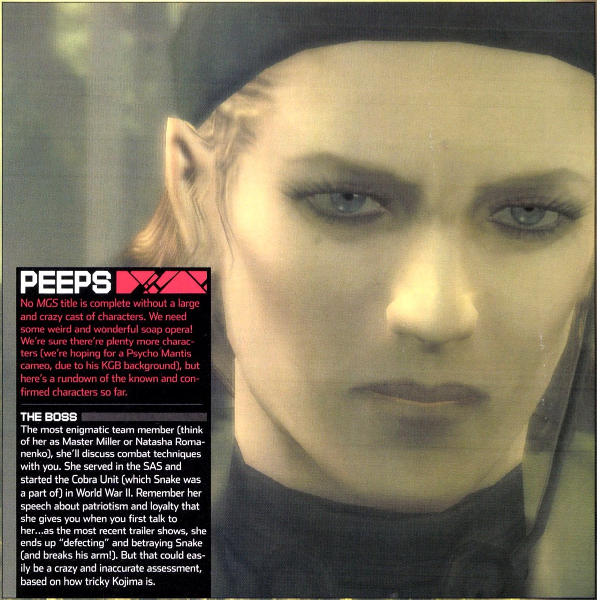
0/1
THRM G
x02
25/25

### BIRDS, BEES, AND TREES

Right in the first section (Dremuchij South), you're treated to lots of lush foliage. Snake doesn't even have his equipment yet, but he can still get quite a bit of food in the area by cutting down mushrooms and killing snakes. Snake now has a stamina meter, which decreases as he sneaks, fights, and slinks around. If his stamina is too low, he will not heal as fast (Snake heals naturally just by resting in a safe spot) and his aim will become janky, since he can't hold his arm steady. Snake keeps his stamina meter up by eating food he procures in the area. Also, although the feature is not implemented in this demo, if you save the game and reload it a few days later, it will realize that days have passed since you saved, and Snake will have "slept" and recovered his stamina when you load your save.

While there are numerous flora and fauna for him to dine on (see Food sidebar on page 99), there are other considerations besides what he eats and how much stamina he recovers. Animals can be tranquilized or killed, and you can carry up to three sedated animals at one time. The advantage a sedated animal has over a dead one is that sedated animals don't rot, while dead ones do; this rot, in turn, affects Snake's taste and stamina recovery. Finally, Snake can be a picky eater, but if you feed him something distasteful over and over again, he could grow to like it and possibly get more stamina than usual as a result. Amusingly enough, Kojima admits that "most of the animals and plants in the game are fictional," and further explains, "Our team has discussed going out to eat snakes and alligators, but it has not happened yet. Honestly speaking, I have a lot of dislikes. I cannot handle most seafood. I would like to be able to eat anything like Snake does."

Next screen over, you grab your equipment and see not only what he starts with, but all the stuff he's not supposed to have yet. Technically, Snake is supposed to have only the minimum amount of equipment available for his mission (just the MK-22). Kojima decided to give gamers a taste of Snake's extended arsenal by putting extra weapons in the demo.

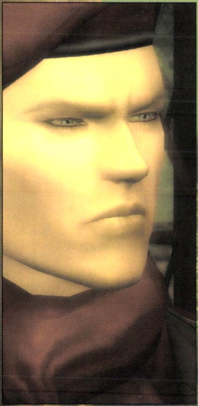


# PEEPS

No *MGS* title is complete without a large and crazy cast of characters. We need some weird and wonderful soap opera! We're sure there're plenty more characters (we're hoping for a Psycho Mantis cameo, due to his KGB background), but here's a rundown of the known and confirmed characters so far.

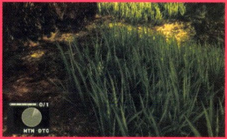
## THE BOSS

The most enigmatic team member (think of her as Master Miller or Natasha Romanenko), she'll discuss combat techniques with you. She served in the SAS and started the Cobra Unit (which Snake was a part of) in World War II. Remember her speech about patriotism and loyalty that she gives you when you first talk to her...as the most recent trailer shows, she ends up "defecting" and betraying Snake (and breaks his arm!). But that could easily be a crazy and inaccurate assessment, based on how tricky Kojima is.



## OCELOT

He's not in the demo, but based on the trailer footage, you can tell that he's first encountered in the abandoned factory at Rassvet. In fact, we bet you run into him right after you meet Sokolov. We're not told his name quite yet, but he's referred to as an officer from the Ocelot unit within the Spetsnaz. Which is odd, because, well, he kills all the KGB soldiers in the demo, despite being Russian too. Also, he's characterized as a reckless and arrogant character, a sensible start before he became coolly badass in *MGS1* and *2*.



SNAKE
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WOODLAND
LEAF
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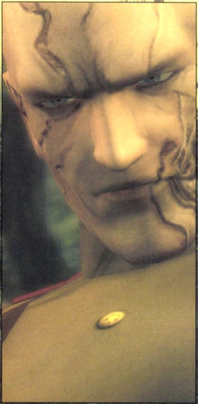
## SNEAKING IN THE GRASS

Snake's mission is primarily a sneaking one, and to that end, he has plenty of gadgets to help him detect enemies. There's a motion sensor, which shows everything that's moving onscreen (animals included). To see things that aren't moving, you should use the active sonar—but that runs the risk of alerting enemies (since it sends out an audible pulse). Finally, there's the AP sensor, which is tuned to enemy soldiers and vibrates when they're nearby—though, it has a limited range. Snake also has thermal goggles (useful for spotting soldiers and wildlife) and night-vision goggles to help him scout around.

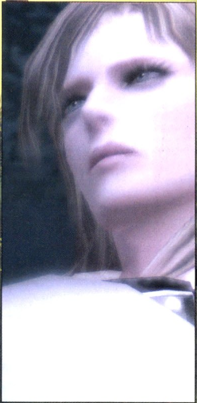
Finally, there's the camouflage, the other key component of *MGS3*. The camouflage index adds an interesting angle to the game—it's less about avoidance and more about predatory survival. Enemies have a pretty good chance of spotting you if they're on alert, even when you're camouflaged. Instead, you use the camouflage as a way to situate yourself, to allow you to patiently focus on your target, wait, and then strike when appropriate. It's even more gratifying to use the sniper rifle, and if your target is still alive, to hear him report, "Under fire! Enemy position unknown!" Kojima even recommends the movie *Predator* as a good primer for *MGS3*, since that film is filled with all sorts of jungle-stalking action.

Snake uses camouflage, close-quarters combat, and other slick tricks, but the enemies he faces have been improved as well. Immediately, one will notice that the enemy A.I. has been beefed up a bit. Guard alerts persist between screens. Just as you can track local animals by watching them move through the grass, soldiers can stalk you by following the sound you make when crawling through leaves. If they see you go around a corner or a tree and out of direct line of sight, they'll lob grenades in your direction. If you toss a grenade at them, they'll jump out of the way. If you shoot their radios, they'll run back looking for other guards to help. If your stamina is low, your stomach growl might give your position away.



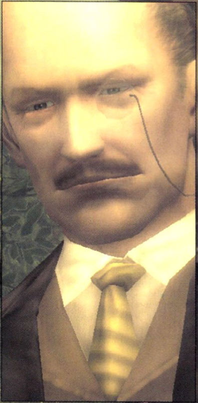
### COLONEL VOLGIN

Volgin is the enigmatic badass with the messed-up face and electric hands. In the first trailer, he beats the crap out of Snake, and in the most recent trailer, he fires a nuclear weapon on Russian soil. Volgin is characterized as a physically big and powerful person who gets what he wants, so his demand for Boss to cut out Snake's eyes is most likely a clue as to why Big Boss is missing an eye. Also, his willingness to nuke his fellow Russians demonstrates a complexity beyond the simple "Russians good, Americans bad."



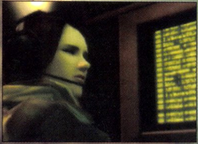
### EVA

A saucy-looking lady from the trailers (note that she tends to look like she's wearing only a jumpsuit and a bra). She definitely hooks up with Snake (there is word of a love scene between her and Snake), and besides being a bed partner, she's also a combat partner. In the most recent trailer, she's shown driving a bike with Snake in the sidecar—Kojima has confirmed that this isn't just a cut-scene. There will be gameplay segments where Eva is driving and Snake is gunning away from his sidecar.



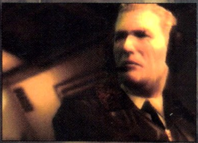
### SOKOLOV

This wimpy scientist who has only a few words for you in the demo seems to be part of the Metal Gear project. Other than the fact that he has a monocle, not much is known about him. If you've seen any of the previous trailers, you'll see that soon after entering Sokolov's room, you run into Revolver Ocelot, and sometime after that, Boss supposedly turns on you. Sokolov semi-coins the term "Metal Gear," in describing his project as a gear that links heavy artillery with mobile infrantry into one metal machine.



### PARA-MEDIC

A bright doctor from Boston, she's similar to Mei Ling/Rose. She looks after your health and also probably handles saving your game in the real game. Also, she watches a lot of Animal Planet, as she will tell you facts and tidbits about all the plants and animals you capture for food.



### MAJOR TOM

Think of him as the new (or, technically, old) Roy Campbell. Major Tom is a veteran soldier, having served in the British SAS alongside Boss, and is your commanding officer for this mission. Oddly enough, this mission is called"Virtuous Mission" in the demo, yet in other trailers, the mission is called "Snake Eater"—unless "Snake Eater" is the title of the second mission! Hmmm....Anyhow, his time in the SAS and his British citizenship translates into lots and lots of random jokes about tea and scones.

### WARNING! SPECULATIVELY SPOILERIFIC

If you haven't already, just put this magazine down and fire up the demo. Besides the stuff we've already covered, there are lots of little tips and tricks for you to try out scattered throughout. Come back here when you're done.

Ready? The demo ends with Snake opening the door, and as Sokolov starts to speak, the screen fades to black. Anyone who's seen an *MGS* trailer (whether on the Web or our past demo discs) knows that a lot more is coming up. If you haven't seen the most recent trailer (the one shown at the German Games Convention), head over to www.konamijpn.com/products/mgs3/english/index.html to check it out. This trailer shows a very key scene in which Boss defects to the Soviet Union, breaks Snake's arm, and then throws him off a bridge. Gamers might be wondering why the heck Snake, with skull-patterned face paint, is in a drop pod attached to a Blackbird-style spy plane. Kojima has confirmed that the HALO jump in the demo is merely part of the prologue and that the Blackbird jump is a second mission with the same Snake, but under more difficult circumstances—which implies that this second jump is the start of the actual game proper. Of course, we could easily be wrong, but we won't know until we review *MGS3* in our January issue. Until then, this demo is the first step for us to follow Snake's proclamation: "We need to pass the torch and let our children read our messy and sad history by its light."

### TIME OUT

Note, unfortunately, that the demo times out pretty easily (like many other demos on the disc). It won't time out, though, if you die and the screen says, "Snake Is Dead/Time Paradox" and shows an option to continue or quit. So, if you want to take a break during the demo and not lose your spot, die on purpose. When you continue, you start off in the same condition you entered the area in.

**SPACE ODDITY**

David Bowie first uttered "Ground control to Major Tom" to U.K. radio airwaves in 1969.

# MILITARY TERMS

Hideo Kojima strives for authenticity, and our casual research of the various acronyms and military terms confirms his work. Here's a rundown of some of the more complicated and interesting stuff referred to in both the demo and recent *MGS3* trailers.

## FULTON SURFACE-TO-AIR RECOVERY SYSTEM

A weird extraction system involving balloons and airplanes. Basically, the recovery kit is dropped to the awaiting person, who then puts on a harness and inflates the balloon. A lift line on the balloon then attaches to the plane; once it's attached, the plane reels the recovered person in. Colonel Allison Brooks performed the first recorded test of the Fulton system at Edwards Air Force Base in May 1966. Meaning Snake does his a full two years early.

## MC-130E COMBAT TALON

The plane that Maj. Tom and Para-Medic are stationed in is a gunship modified specifically for covert operations. The Combat Talon I is like a basic C-130, except it has better countermeasures and terrain-following radar, which allows it to sneakily fly deep into enemy territory. Note that the Combat Talon I is specifically equipped with the Fulton recovery system. These planes were used extensively during the Vietnam War—often dropping in special commando teams deep within North Vietnam.

## MK-22 HUSH PUPPY

A Smith & Wesson Model 39 9mm automatic pistol, modified to fit a silencer (thus sounding like a .22) by the Naval Special Warfare Unit in the Vietnam War. It's called the "Hush Puppy" because it was mostly used to kill sentry dogs that would betray a soldier's presence. Snake's is further modified to shoot tranquilizer darts. Also, Boss directly comments that Snake is testing the Hush Puppy to see how it performs before the Navy makes it standard issue.

## HALO

High altitude, low opening. This is a stealthy drop because it starts high at 30,000 feet (conventional radar isn't accurate that far up) and the person performing the drop deploys his parachute beneath radar range. If it's performed correctly, he shouldn't be detected. The first recorded combat HALO drop was in July 1970 by members of MACV-SOG performing covert operations in Laos. So, as Major Tom comments, Snake is hence performing the world's first combat HALO six years before MACV-SOG.

## PERMIT-CLASS SUBMARINE

Previously called the Thresher. The Thresher class of attack submarines was stronger, faster, and could dive deeper and more quietly than the prevailing Skipjacks, thanks to a variety of materials and streamlining improvements. When the first commissioned Thresher sank off the New England coast in 1963, the Navy decided to change the class designation to Permit. The Thresher tragedy had the side-effect of the Navy creating the SubSafe Program, which in turn made submarines a lot safer in general.

## DCI

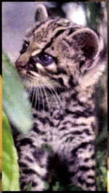
Stands for Director of Central Intelligence. Not only is he the head of the CIA, but he is also the head of all the intelligence in the U.S. He reports directly to the President and the National Security Council on all issues pertaining to intelligence. His personal approval of Snake's mission means that this mission is so important that it can only be handled by important people up top and not by a traditional midlevel agent. John McCone was the DCI in 1964, so he's the guy that gave Snake the greenlight for this mission.

## M-21 BLACKBIRD

If you watched the new trailer and thought you noticed the sleek SR-71 Blackbird plane zipping around, you're partially right. It's not the famous SR-71 but a modified Blackbird—it still flies around really fast, and it can also drop off the D-21 drone aircraft. Or in this case, a pod with Snake inside it. Also note that the first M-21 was built in 1963, but the project was ended in 1964. You can actually go the Museum of Flight in Seattle, and see an M-21 for yourself. Just don't go looking for Snake's graffiti, okay?

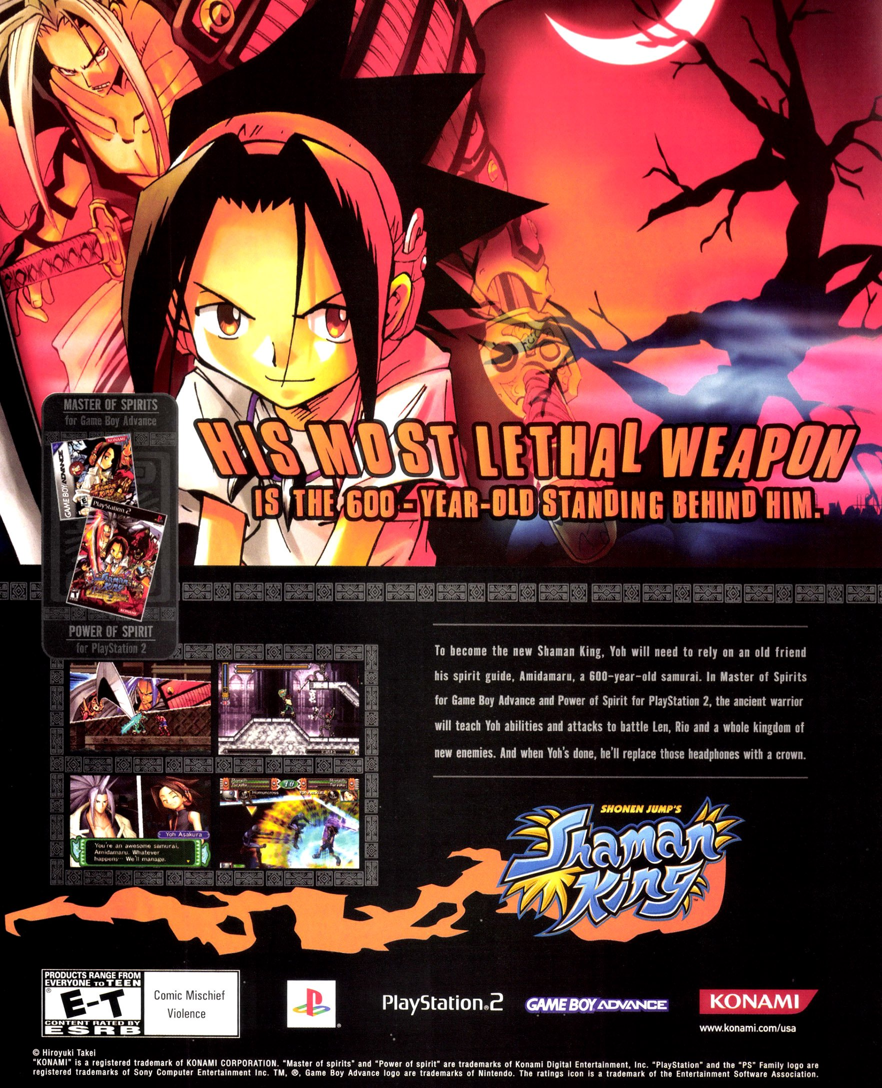
## SPETSNAZ

Russian special forces troops (like U.S. Green Berets) The word is an acronym for the Russian phrase *spetsialnoe naznachenie*, which translates into "special purpose." Their operational protocol was defined as *spetsialnaya razvedka* (special reconnaissance), which involved armed recon and sabotage operations deep within enemy lines. Revolver Ocelot is revealed to be the commanding officer within the Ocelot unit of the Spetsnaz in a recent *MGS3* trailer.



**OCELOT**

A nocturnal wildcat found mostly in the southwestern U.S., and parts of South and Central America.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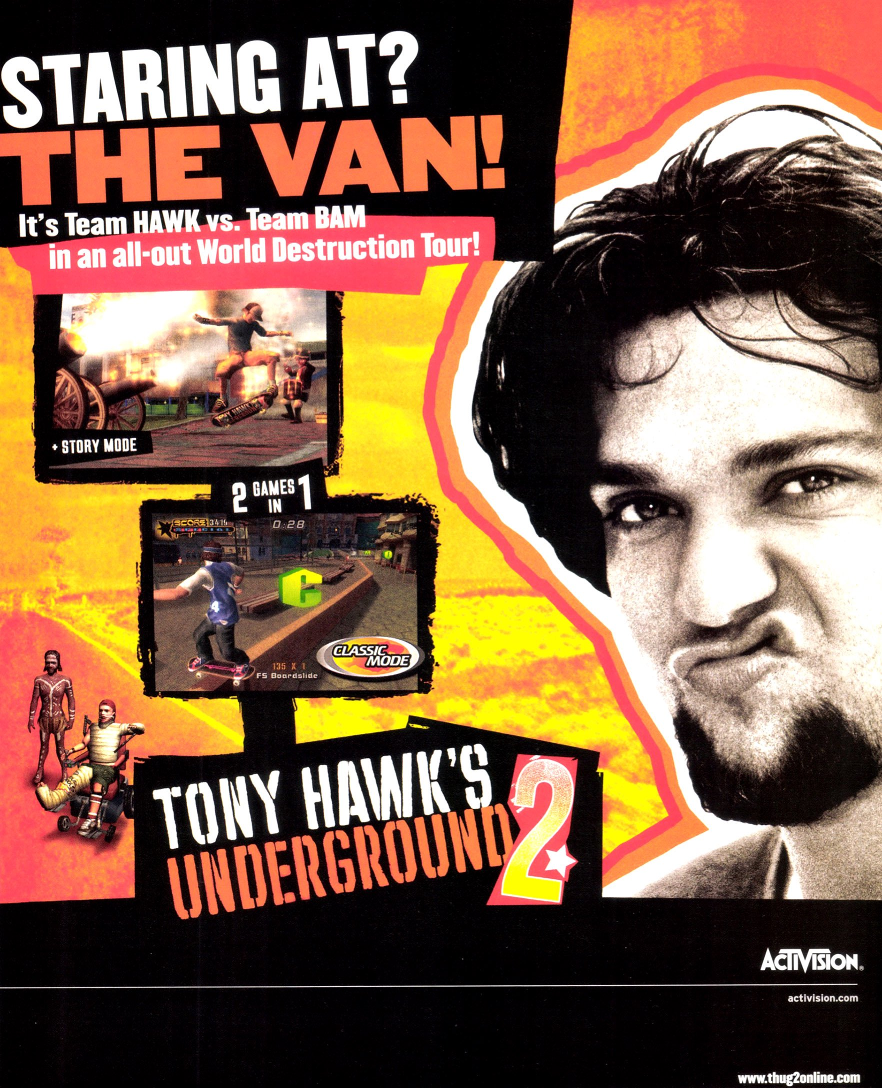
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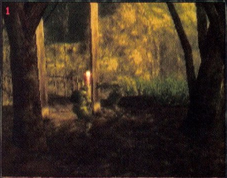
# DID YOU TRY?

Here are some fun things to do—remember that Kojima has a quirky sense of humor and has inserted quite a few little touches in the demo.

**1** Shoot down a hornets' nest near some guards.
**2** Interrogate every guard—one of them has a surprise revelation for you.
**3** Take a left after the bridge at Dolinovodno, or even more daring, jump off the other end and onto the obvious branch below.
**4** Hide underneath the factory and stab at the guards' feet from the crawlspace.
**5** Spin Snake around in the survival view—that will cause him to hurl. Kojima is particularly proud of this, and when asked why, he answers, "Gimmicks like this can be done in games only. And I think I'm the only one in the industry who would do something like this."
**6** Try throwing a grenade through the factory window and into Sokolov's room.
**7** Try shooting through the window instead.
**8** Try tossing a grenade into an alligator's open mouth.
**9** Hit Triangle when you're either near the barrel at the top of the stairs in Rassvet or near the overturned barrel on the east side of the factory.
**10** Shoot or cut all the ropes on the bridge in Dolinovodno.
**11** Repeatedly talk to everyone via radio. Boss' conversation with you about your sense of smell is particularly amusing.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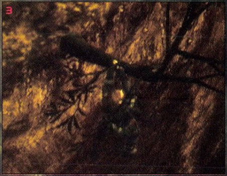
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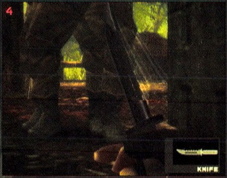
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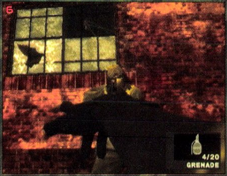
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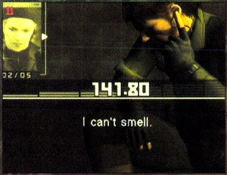
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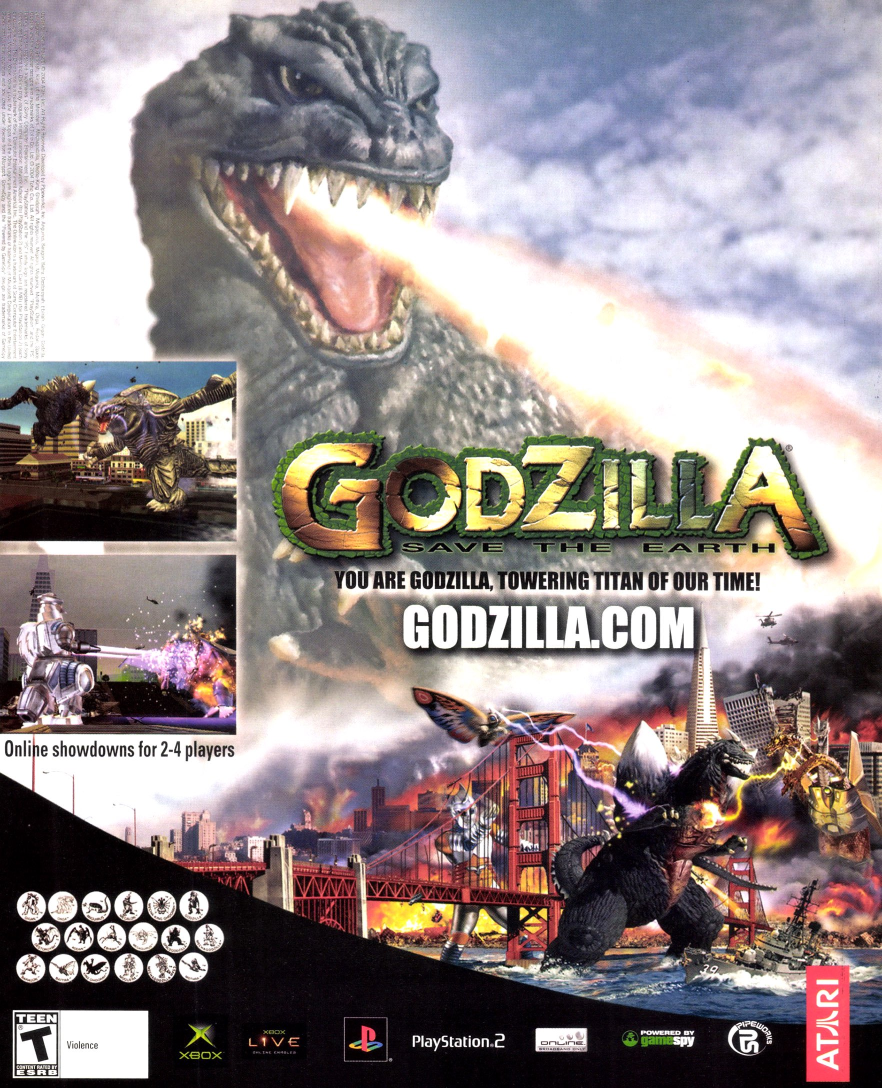
# METAL GEAR MOVIE?

We asked Kojima if he'd ever consider making an *MGS* movie, whether as a live-action film or even a CG one à la *FFVII: Advent Children*. His reply: "To me, *MGS* is in its best form as a game. *MGS* is a game. I do not want to turn it into a film myself. I don't mind someone else making a live-action film." Hmm, time for someone like Michael Bay (we mean the Michael Bay who did *The Rock*, not the Michael Bay who did *Pearl Harbor*) to take the director's spot!

**METAL GEAR SOLID SAGA IN 5 SECONDS**

*Metal Gear Solid:*
Nukes are dumb.
*Metal Gear Solid 2:*
Raiden is dumb.
THE END



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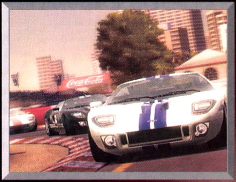

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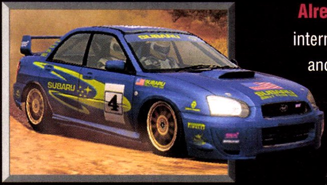

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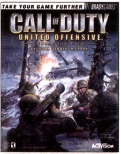
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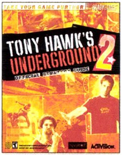
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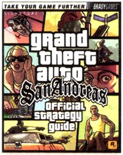
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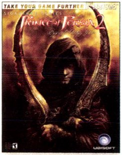
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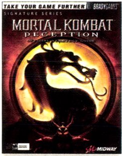
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[●●●●●]

RATING KEY

**Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blargs.** Call our rating symbols what you will—just know that any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.5? Well...at least they're fun to rip apart.

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH

## SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

### TWICE THE GAMEPLAY, TWICE THE VARIETY, ALL THE FUN

We loved the first Sly, and if you like platformers you probably did, too. Yeah, it was a little short and a little simple, but it was just so damn charming that we couldn't resist. The sequel is twice as long and features two more playable characters and a bunch more types of gameplay. What's not to love?

# STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

### MAKING STAR WARS COOL AGAIN

**EXPENDABLE CHARACTERS**

It's cool to fight alongside and against Vader, Luke, Dooku, and Mace Windu, but why can't I be them, at least in single player? Instead, I'm always the likes of Doomed Stormtrooper No. 44. The expendability of each character certainly makes each death lack the impact it might have if you at least had the power to name a character, much less create your own look for each. Apparently, all Rebel marksmen are actually markswomen...with really nice butts.

**There's a lot of dissent** about the state of *Star Wars* these days. "The new movies suck," many cry. "George Lucas is ruining my childhood memories," others complain. To the whiners, I say this: Just play *Battlefront* already.

In the 22-year history of *Star Wars* games, none has ever so closely depicted the all-out sense of epic battle presented in *Battlefront*. Inspired by—heck, in some ways downright copying—the gameplay established by EA's megapopular *Battlefield 1942* PC title, this online-compatible game replaces Allies with Rebels, panzers with AT-ATs, and world war with galactic strife. From Naboo to Endor, the game accounts for any ground battle you've seen in any *Star Wars* movie and adds several others, too. This is any *Star Wars* fan's dream, and it plays so well that fans of first- or third-person shooters will love it, too.

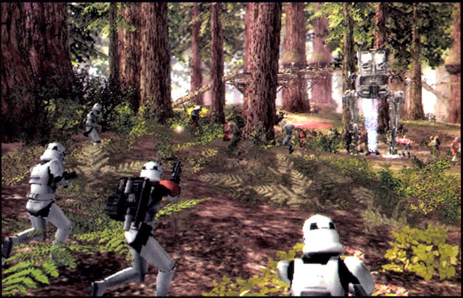
Each of the 16 maps spread across 10 worlds features six to eight points known as command posts. **The key to victory lies in overtaking the posts under enemy control** while defending the ones already in your possession. It's a simple concept, but the beauty of *Battlefront* is that there are so many ways to win or lose.

Each of the four factions (Rebel versus Empire or Republic versus Separatist) possesses five types of warriors—it's your job to determine the best one given your environment and situation. If you're a Rebel on Yavin, do you choose a Rebel vanguard to shoot down the chicken walkers with your missile launcher? Or is it a better idea to leave that to someone else while you use the normal Rebel soldier's quick-shooting blaster to take over an Imperial command post, guns a-blazin'? Either could succeed; either could fail—and there are multiple other strategies to choose from as well.

Maybe taking immediate control of a vehicle could give you the upper hand. What if you pick up five comrades in a Republic gunship, fly it behind the Separatists, and flank them from behind to take over their farthest-back command post? Doing so would allow you to spawn new clone troopers from that spot so as to better sandwich all those pesky battle droids. But it's also quite risky if you don't have the skills to back up such a ballsy maneuver. Then again, land at the right time, and you might just find a Separatist spider walker or other enemy vehicle that you can commandeer yourself, Chewie-to-AT-ST style.

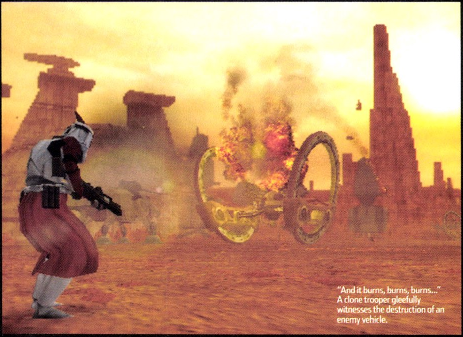
**Being able to pilot any vehicle you see**—from tiny speeder bikes and tauntauns to humongous AT-TEs and AT-AT walkers—adds a lot to the game, but mastering their use requires a lot of practice, especially for anything speedy. Even after 15 hours of play, I still can't fly an X-wing or Jedi Starfighter at normal speed with any real control, which makes me a sitting duck trying to blow away TIEs at zero throttle. It's possible I just suck, but from what I've seen of others in ships online, Pandemic could have tightened up the starship controls.

But make no mistake, *Battlefront*'s controls are otherwise as tight as they come. Whether you prefer first or third person, everything feels spot-on everywhere you aim.



**I WANNA BE A TUSKEN!**

Certain maps throw in native races to vary things up a bit, such as Tusken Raiders on Tatooine, Ewoks on Endor, and Gungans on Naboo. That's awesome. However, you have to wonder how hard it would have been for Pandemic to actually let us—if only on one map—actually control these races. Just imagine how fun it'd be to whack a TIE pilot upside the head with a gaffi stick!

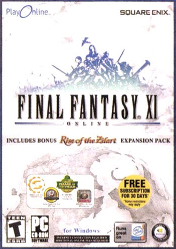


"And it burns, burns, burns..." A clone trooper gleefully witnesses the destruction of an enemy vehicle.

### HISTORY LESSON

Embarrassed by your inability to wax eloquent on the defeat of the Rebellion at Mos Eisley? Then play *Battlefront*'s historical campaign, which walks you through significant battles in *Star Wars* history. Some you'll recognize from the movies, others are nice side stories.

# Begin Your Journey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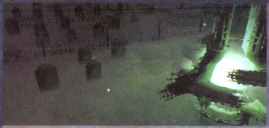
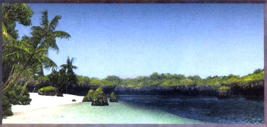
# Expand the Adventure





The world of Vana'diel gets even
bigger with this FINAL FANTASY XI
expansion pack, featuring massive
new regions to explore, frightening
new enemies to engage, and an
unfolding mystery to confront.

PlayStation 2

ONLINE
BROADBAND AND DIAL-UP

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Animated Blood
Mild Language
Violence
Game Experience May Change During Online Play

PC
CD-ROM
SOFTWARE
for
Windows®

The way it's meant to be played
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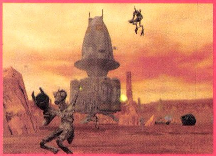


In some cases, your aim might just be to look at the beautiful scenery around you. *Battlefront* is easily one of the best-looking PS2 games out there right now, and everything maintains a solid framerate even when your screen is filled with soldiers.

**And when you're playing online, that could be as many as 16 players at once.** But a word of advice: If you start a 16-player room (as opposed to, say, a two- or four-player room), make sure you're able to fill it. I learned the hard way that a 16-player game with only six people playing makes for a dull time—sometimes you can't even find anyone to shoot at.

Actually, even those of you without Network Adaptors can get quite a bit of enjoyment out of the game. A.I.-controlled opposition normally performs very competently, right down to knowing it should clog the entry to an ice tunnel on Rhen Var with a shielded destroyer droid to most efficiently blow away any Republic opposition. (Damn, that's annoying!) Ironically, **the stupidest soldiers on the battlefield tend to be the four Jedi heroes** that sometimes help out. It's neat seeing Luke, Vader, Mace Windu, and Count Dooku out there, but c'mon guys—do something!

When playing offline, the best time to be had is during the historical campaign, which offers a *Star Wars* history lesson. Whether you select the Clone Wars era or the Galactic Civil War, it guides you battle by battle from familiar skirmishes on Naboo and Hoth to made-up ones on Tatooine and Rhen Var. And then there's galactic conquest mode, which takes a *Risk* approach as you attempt to conquer the galaxy planet by planet. You can also play this against someone in splitscreen—but why isn't it online? Beating a person is so much more satisfying than beating the computer at a game like this.

Regardless, though, *Battlefront* has what it takes to satisfy just about anyone. It's the kind of game that should make you welcome the fact that *Star Wars* is here to stay—even if you've already decided that *Revenge of the Sith* will be the worst movie ever made. « *Chris Baker*

## OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

**PROS** Every movie ground battle, great strategy, spot-on controls, beautiful graphics, solid A.I., movie atmosphere, 16-player online play
**CONS** Some tricky vehicles, Jedi helpers useless, can't play as Jedi or secondary races
**Pub.** LucasArts **Dev.** Pandemic **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

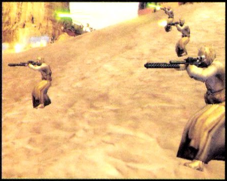
[●●●●◐]

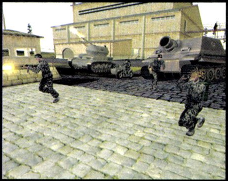
**THE ANSWER IS YES**
Yes, you can shoot Jawas. Yes, you can shoot Gungans. Yes, you can shoot Ewoks.

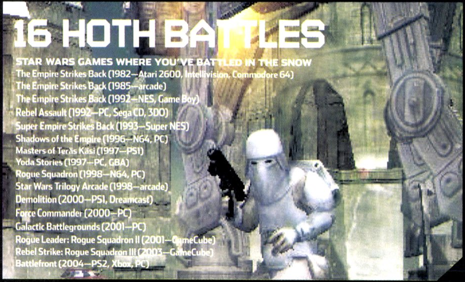
**BUT WHY WOULD YOU SHOOT JAWAS?**
Well...'cause it's fun. Oh, and if you're a stormtrooper, shooting Jawas actually gives you health. Two benefits wrapped up into one tidy package—now that's efficient!

## BATTLEFRONT VS. BATTLEFIELD

In many ways, *Battlefront* really is just a *Star Wars* version of EA's PC smash *Battlefield 1942*. Both games feature dwindling tickets and the need to capture control points, though *Battlefront's* tickets decrease when someone dies, while *Battlefield's* tickets just count down regardless of what's going on. Also, *Battlefield* doesn't allow you to call up the mighty Mark Hamill for help (i.e., there are no powerful summons or bonuses á la *Battlefront*). Then again, *Battlefront* doesn't let you shoot Nazis, so both games are even.



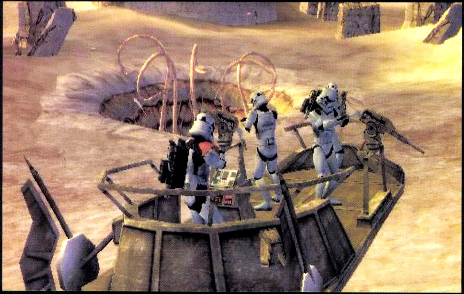




## 16 HOTH BATTLES

**STAR WARS GAMES WHERE YOU'VE BATTLED IN THE SNOW**

The Empire Strikes Back (1982—Atari 2600, Intellivision, Commodore 64)
The Empire Strikes Back (1985—arcade)
The Empire Strikes Back (1992—NES, Game Boy)
Rebel Assault (1992—PC, Sega CD, 3DO)
Super Empire Strikes Back (1993—Super NES)
Shadows of the Empire (1996—N64, PC)
Masters of Teräs Käsi (1997—PS1)
Yoda Stories (1997—PC, GBA)
Rogue Squadron (1998—N64, PC)
Star Wars Trilogy Arcade (1998—arcade)
Demolition (2000—PS1, Dreamcast)
Force Commander (2000—PC)
Galactic Battlegrounds (2001—PC)
Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II (2001—GameCube)
Rebel Strike: Rogue Squadron III (2003—GameCube)
Battlefront (2004—PS2, Xbox, PC)



## SEE THE GALAXY

Quite a few geek-out moments exist in *Battlefront*. Just wait until you get eaten by the Sarlacc! Or when you see Han Solo encased in carbonite at Bespin! Or when you finally manage to trip that AT-AT with a harpoon and two cables! Good stuff.

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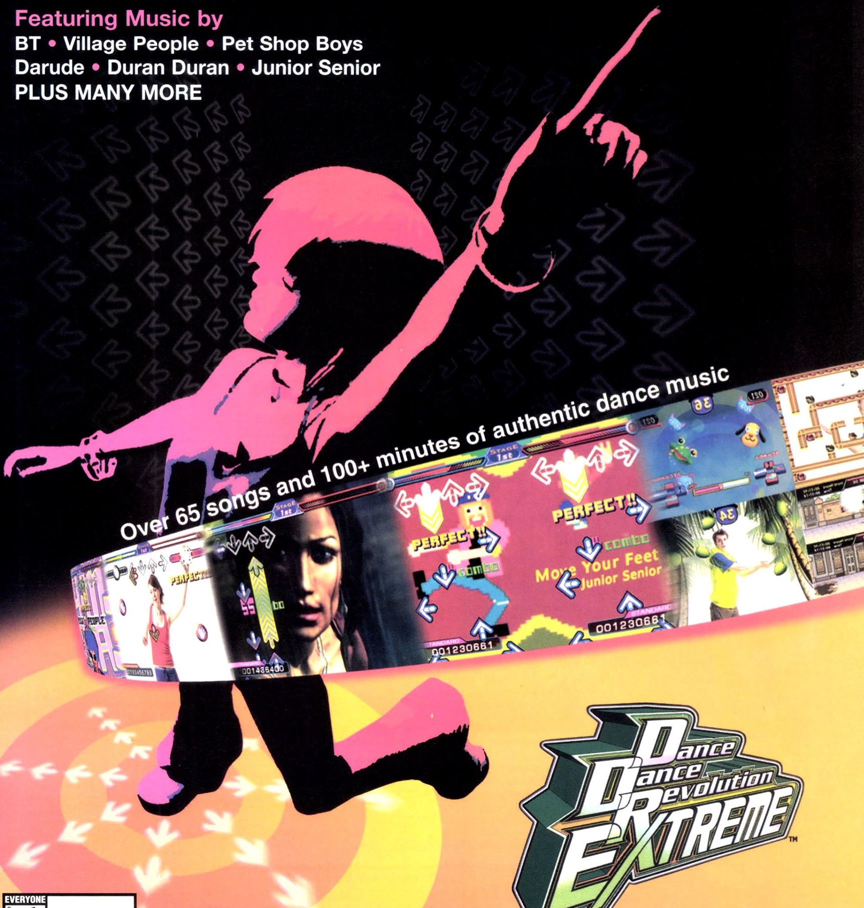

**Over 65 songs and 100+ minutes of authentic dance music**

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Lyrics
Suggestive Themes

PlayStation®2

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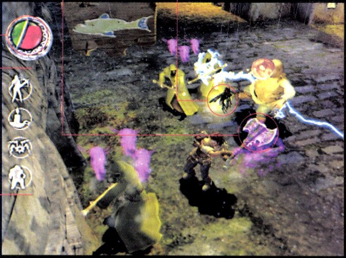


The battle-ax, as you can see, is huge. The ability to wield a two-handed weapon isn't something you start the game with, but it's a useful skill to pick up as soon as you possibly can.

Somewhere behind these bad guys is your little dog. You can't see him here, but he's very cute—and he's also invincible. He doesn't inflict much damage, but he's very useful for distracting the bad guys.

The red gauge is your health, and it tends to disappear very quickly, unless you're sporting good armor. The green stuff is your magical juice, which lets your music summon help.

These four slots represent the summoned creatures that the Bard has brought forth with his music. Early in the game, you can use only one at a time, but after about eight or nine hours of play, you have a veritable army.

# THE BARD'S TALE

## WINE, WOMEN, SONG, LAUGHS

**At first glance,** *The Bard's Tale* is yet another one of those games that uses the same engine as *Baldur's Gate* or *Norrath*. It has a very similar look, the same combat-heavy gameplay, and the same satisfying feel to the controls. What sets *The Bard's Tale* apart, though, is its sense of humor. Unlike a distressing number of games these days, especially those in the role-playing genre, *TBT*'s primary purpose is to entertain you, and it does this in a variety of very effective ways.

The most immediate and obvious difference here is the interplay between the characters, primarily that between the Bard himself (voiced by Cary Elwes, sporting a dubious Cockney accent—one of many dubious accents in the game) and the narrator of the game (voiced by Tony Jay, who you probably know best as the Elder God in the *Legacy of Kain* games), who verbally spar with each other at every available opportunity. Try to do something stupid in the game, and the narrator will berate the Bard relentlessly.

**It's terribly postmodern in places, too.** The characters very much know that they are in a game and make fun of RPG conventions whenever they appear—by mocking objects that come out of creatures when you defeat them or by questioning the use of joypad buttons. It makes for a thoroughly enjoyable experience, and it replaces the usual character development that we typically find in stodgy fantasy games. Pretty much everything in the entire story is the subject of sarcasm or mockery, so you never really dwell on the fact that you can't remember the name of the ultimate bad guy or that the clichéd purpose of the game (also part of the humor) is to rescue a character who you know only as "the Princess." The script even takes this a step further by giving every character you interact with in one town the exact same name. The Bard himself is a simple fella, motivated solely by cash, booze, and boobs, and there are many moments throughout the script when things get a bit racy, purely by implication or omission. This isn't a particularly rude game, unless you're listening very carefully.

Aside from the laughs, **it's a very competent action-RPG.** The first few hours are a bit harder than you'd expect, but things really start to get interesting once you hit hour four on the game clock. From that point on, you start to learn new magical tunes that summon creatures to help you, and your abilities improve to a point that you can wade through the enemies more efficiently. In terms of gameplay, *The Bard's Tale* doesn't do anything particularly original, but that's not really the point. The point is the content, the script, and the wit, and in these areas it excels. « *John Davison*

### SING-ALONG-A-BARD

As if the script weren't funny enough, the game is filled with musical interludes. Drunks, out-of-tune warriors, and little creatures with squeaky voices sing the majority of these, and all the songs are so catchy, they'll stick in your head for days. There's even a cute bouncing ball that highlights the lyrics, so you can sing along if you want.

### OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

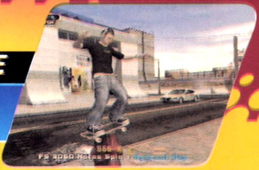
**FUNNY** Enough songs, jokes, boobs, and booze to satisfy lusty appetites
**NOT** It can get a bit hard in places

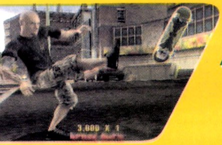
**Pub.** Vivendi Universal **Dev.** InXile Ent. **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

[ ●●●●◐ ]

Nestlé Butterfinger PRESENTS YOUR MONTHLY GAME FEED

# BETTER BRING YOUR BEST





## out of the ordinary GAME

### TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2

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Two Teams. Hardcore Skating. Wild Stunts. World Destruction. You've been chosen by Tony Hawk to take on Bam Margera as your teams go globetrotting on an insane road trip: the World Destruction Tour. THUG 2® grinds in with a hilarious story mode, an unprecedented level of customization, and more moves than the Skate Gods could dream of.

Make the world your own skate park, as you spray your custom tag, slap stickers, and even create new skate lines as you wreak havoc.

With THUG 2® you can play as yourself, your teammates, or as over 20 special guest skaters including the father of the Franklin Grind himself, Benjamin Franklin.

When you're ready to go old school, check out Classic Mode with all-time favorite goals like S-K-A-T-E, Secret Tape, and High Score against a two-minute timer.

So grab your board, an arsenal of spray-paint, jump into the tour van and get ready to wreak havoc across the globe.

4,151 X 2
FS 50-50 - Franklin Grind!!!

## break out CODES

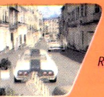
### DRIV3R

**ps2 | xbx | gc**

Enter the following at the Main Menu to unlock the desired code.

**All Weapons:** R1, L2, Square, Circle, R1, R2, L2.

**Immunity:** Circle, Circle, L1, L2, R1, R2, Square.



**Invincibility** (Doesn't work in Story mode): Square, Square, L1, R1, L2, R2, R2.

**Unlimited Ammo:** R1, R2, R1, R2, Square, Circle, Square

Unlock all Missions: L1, R1, L1, L2, Square, Square, Circle.

**Unlock all Vehicles:** L1, L1, Square, Circle, L1, R1, Circle.

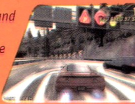
## sweet TRICKS

### BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

**ps2 | xbx | gc**

**Race Tips:**

- Tailgate your opponents to psyche them out, and earn boost in the process.
- Slam your rivals into traffic to take them down, and expand your boost bar.
- Each track has signature Takedown points, e.g. the pillars under the El in Downtown—these will earn you special rewards.



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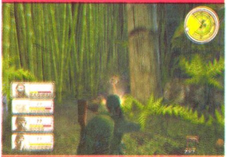
BREAK OUT OF THE ORDINARY

# CONFLICT: VIETNAM

## WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

**If you've played** either of the other *Conflict* games, you already know what to expect here: an arcadey game of squad-based warfare that's pretty rough around the edges. And that's exactly what you get.

Of course, *Vietnam* has its share of new features. For one thing, it does a really good job of capturing the feel of the '60s and the madness of the Vietnam War. Period music blares while you're at your home base, creating a laid-back environment before your first mission—and suddenly all hell breaks loose and your fellow draftees seem barely able to hold it together, swearing at the top of their lungs and generally freaking out.



From very early on you get the distinct impression that you are in a very bad place, beset on all sides by faceless enemies ready to leap out of the jungle at any moment. Unfortunately, part of this feeling of powerlessness comes from the awful controls. The developers have still not figured out how to do a subtle autoaim; you either have your reticule whipping around spastically as it jumps from one target to another, or you turn off autoaim and shoot more or less blindly. Even with the autoaim off, your target seems to jump even if you place only the slightest pressure on the analog stick.

What's more frustrating is that muddy graphics make aiming in jungle missions (which is most of them) particularly challenging. And the shoddy framerate doesn't help. Maybe all the ugliness was intentional, meant to serve as an allegory for the ugliness of war. But I don't think so.

Still, simple squad controls and fast action could prove diverting for those seeking a simple, fast experience. It's certainly not for the hardcore shooter fan, but newcomers might find it adequate. « *Joe Rybicki*

### PlayStation RATING

**PROS** Great music, nice atmosphere, deliciously foul-mouthed voiceovers, simple squad combat
**CONS** Crappy controls, shoddy framerate

**Pub.** Global Star **Dev.** SCi/Pivotal **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $39.99

[●●◐○○]

# MEGA MAN X: COMMAND MISSION

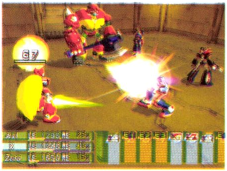
## WHEN ROBOTS ATTACK

**When you sit down** and play *Mega Man X: Command Mission* for the first time, you'll ask yourself: Why didn't Capcom make a traditional *Mega Man* RPG sooner? The question isn't prompted by brilliance in RPG design or masterful storytelling. No, you'll ask it because *Command Mission* uses so many conventional elements that it would've been better released in 2001.

There just isn't anything spectacular about it, except for the nicely done graphics. There are random battles, but they aren't particularly bothersome since they don't occur every five seconds and it's easy to run away from them. Combat is turn-based, but there's strategy involved since turns are determined by specific character statistics. Speedier characters get more turns, while slower characters have fewer opportunities to inflict damage unless they're in a powered-up form, which essentially boosts all stats and gives characters special attacks. Plus, you can switch out your characters during battle just like you can in *Final Fantasy X*, so there's some strategy involved—but honestly, a cat licking the controller could perform just as well as you in most battles.

Fans will dig *Command Mission* because it adapts the *Mega Man* formula so well into an RPG setting, but anyone looking for a sweeping epic with interesting characters or unique gameplay mechanics will be sorely disappointed by what it has to offer. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

**DID YOU KNOW?**
There are around 40 games featuring Mega Man, spanning a variety of platforms. The very first Mega Man game was released for the NES back in 1987.



### PlayStation RATING

**GOOD STUFF** Mega Man fits pretty well within an RPG setting, great visuals
**BAD STUFF** Generic story and undistinguished gameplay

**Pub.** Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●◐○]

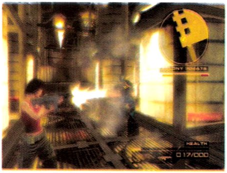
# HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

## PLEASE SAVE ME

**If ever I was hoping** a game lived up to its title, it was with *Headhunter: Redemption*. I really enjoyed the original *Headhunter*, but its bad camera and controls seriously needed some real…well, redeeming. That doesn't happen with the sequel—which should actually be called *Headhunter: Generally Good Like the Last One But Still Pretty Flawed.*

If you played through *Headhunter*, you might remember that the Bloody Mary virus our hero Jack Wade had gone through hell to stop was actually released at the end of the story. In the 20 years since, the virus has been cured, but chaos has ruled supreme, even courtesy of Mother Nature. Devastating earthquakes have reshaped Jack's town into two areas: Above (home to law-abiding citizens) and Below (where all criminals are banished and anarchy rules). It's an interesting setup (albeit one we saw in *Project Eden*…but who played that?), and the story is told pretty well—but its new darker tone is a little off-putting at first to those of us who enjoyed the original. Meanwhile, the excellent satirical *RoboCop*-like newscasts are nowhere to be found, replaced by very forced attempts at humor via PSAs that play over loudspeakers for no apparent reason.

Gameplay itself offers a fun mix of *Metal Gear Solid* stealth, *Syphon Filter* run-n-gun, and *Resident Evil* puzzles (which somehow make even less contextual sense than in *RE*). But in the words of Master Yoda, Amuze: "Control! Control! You must learn control!" Beyond simple things like Jack or his new protégé Leeza X moving too far, right analog control of the X-axis is reversed. Please, at least give me the *option* to press left and have my character look that way.



So no, *Redemption* really redeems nothing. But if you liked the first game, it's a completely serviceable way to spend 20 hours. « *Chris Baker*

### PlayStation RATING

**GOOD STUFF** Interesting story, nice mix of elements from other well-established franchises, good graphics
**BAD STUFF** Horrible control, forced humor, no real innovation whatsoever
**Pub.** Sega **Dev.** Amuze **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $39.99

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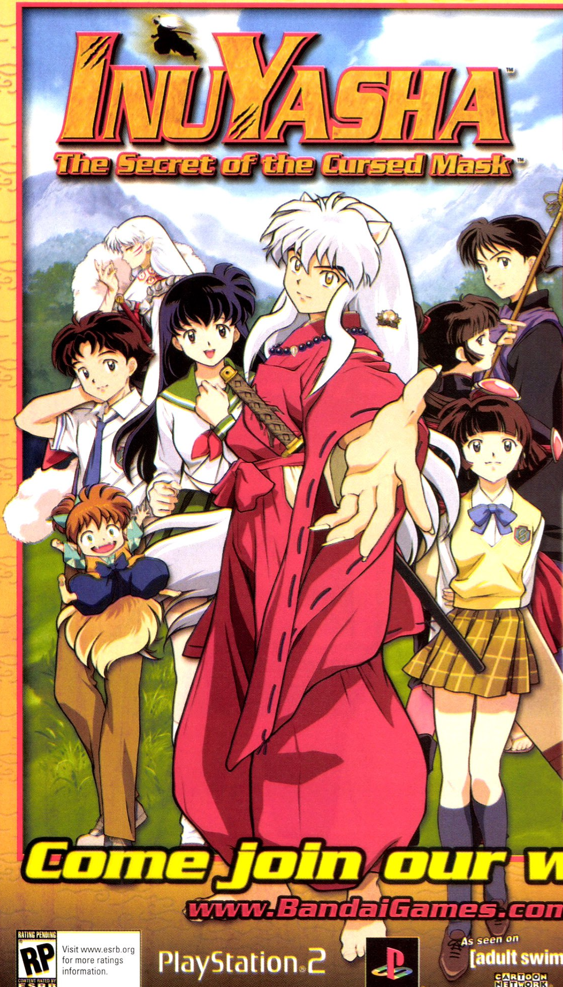
# InuYasha™

## The Secret of the Cursed Mask™



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PlayStation 2

As seen on [adult swim] CARTOON NETWORK

ShoPro ENTERTAINMENT

BANDAI

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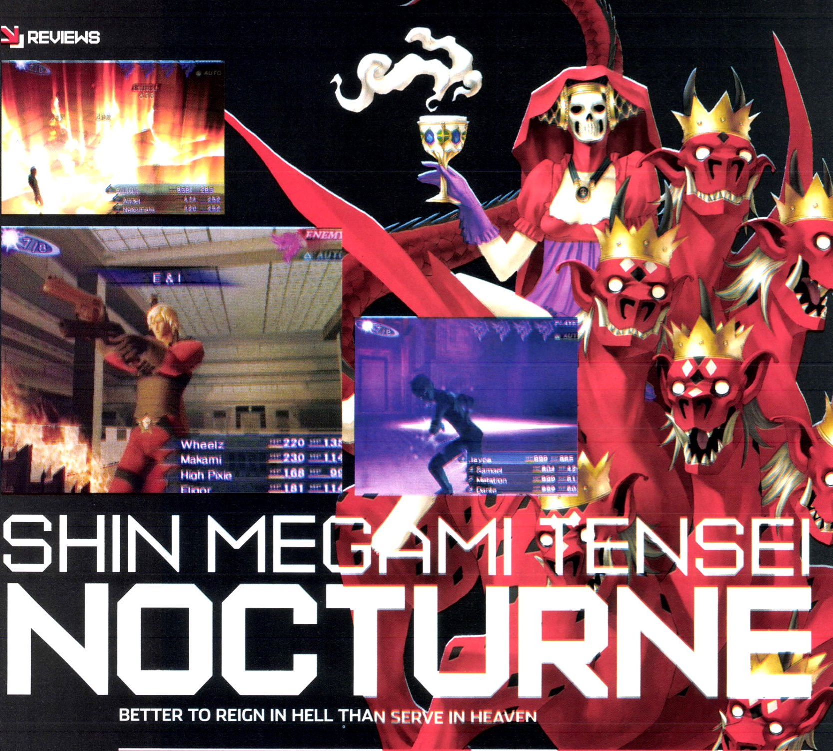

# SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI NOCTURNE

## BETTER TO REIGN IN HELL THAN SERVE IN HEAVEN

**It's not every day** that you find an RPG that not only explicitly features Lucifer, but also doesn't simply cast him as "chaotic evil baddie" with you on the side of Light. Nor is this some Gothy attempt at glorifying darkness, Satanism, and anti-Godness. Instead, what the nigh unpronounceable *Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne* (let's just call it *MegaTen*) offers is a mature story line heavy with theological and philosophical conundrums and accompanied by stunning art direction, intriguing gameplay mechanics, and one of the more rocking soundtracks to grace the RPG genre.

The story starts off traditionally. You're a strapping lad off to meet his friends. Then the Conception (a sort of apocalypse-followed-by-rebirth event) happens, and **you awake to discover that you're now part demon,** thanks to Lucifer. You begin to wander post-Conception Tokyo in search of your friends, but as you deal with all of the new inhabitants and their factions, you uncover your true role in things. Without spoiling too much, the story resembles a fusion of the seminal manga *Akira* and the seminal epic poem *Paradise Lost*.

*MegaTen* does the genius job of playing just enough like a traditional RPG as to not alienate the audience, while still introducing a host of strange and creative innovations. Your party members aren't traditional characters—they're enemies you either recruit during combat or create via fusion at a cathedral. This monsters-as-party-members mechanic adds a bit of a Pokémon feel, and **one could easily spend hours just trying to get monsters to join you** and then seeing what new kinds of monsters can be made. There are no weapons or armor—just inherent and learned skills and spells. You shape the outcome of the game by the philosophical choices you make in dialogues throughout. You even meet Dante of all people in the game. All of this new awesomeness lets you excuse the fact that some dungeons are a little long and that there's virtually no voice acting (yes, you'll actually have to read everything). The game constantly kicked my ass, but the content is so good that **it just motivated me to try harder.**

In a genre that has had few, if any, notable releases since *Final Fantasy X-2* last year, it's wholly refreshing to see something so daring, original, and different come along and shake things up. « *Thierry Nguyen*

**PlayStation RATING**

**CRAZY COOL** A story line that's actually mature, stylish art, neat enemy-recruitment system

**SINS** It's pretty damn hard, and some of the dungeons are pretty damn long

**Pub.** Atlus **Dev.** Atlus **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $49.99

[ ●●●●◐ ]

# TREE SAP MAY HARM CONTROLLER.

WARNING

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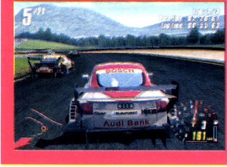
# TOCA RACE DRIVER 2

## SOMETHING FOR THE HARDCORE MOTORSPORTS FANS

***TOCA 2* has an awful lot** going for it. For starters, it has a fantastic heritage, being the latest in the series that spawned the original *TOCA* as well as last year's excellent *Pro Race Driver*. Second, it's just $29.99, which is a spectacular bargain for the volume of stuff that it presents. Third, it's a hardcore race fan's dream, featuring exotics, tuners, open-wheeled cars, stock cars, and even diesel trucks. There aren't many specific cars (just 35), but there are 15 different vehicle classes, making this one of the most varied racers out there.

As with previous Codemasters racers, one of the best things is the driving feel. The controls are quite sensitive, but they react in a way that you would expect them to, and there's no crappy understeer or oversteer to ruin it for you. If I had to compare it to something recent, I'd say it has the most in common with the latest NASCAR game from EA. It's realistic with just enough "game" injected to make it a pleasurable drive. My only issue with it is some of the specific gameplay logic. Opponents drive like line-following robots for the majority of the time, and they behave so predictably that in one Formula Ford race, I managed to win when I had only three wheels. For a game that seems to be playing its realism card so aggressively, this seems a little odd.

Overall presentation is very similar to EA's *NASCAR*, too. As is the fashion lately, it's quite the car-PG, with consistent characters that speak to you during races and push you to race harder. It definitely sucks you into the culture that it's trying to build, and if you're a fan of motorsports, it'll do just that. « *John Davison*



**PlayStation RATING**

**PROS** Good car selection, tons of races, and it's cheap
**CONS** For hardcore racers only, robotic opponents

**Pub.** Codemasters **Dev.** Codemasters **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $29.99

[●●●●○]

# CRASH TWINSANITY

## MAY WE SUGGEST AN AIR BAG?

**A few levels into *Twinsanity*,** Crash's nemesis-turned-partner Neo Cortex laments his lack of cash, saying, "The last few years have been slow...*Wrath of Cortex* didn't do as well as we had hoped." Witty, postmodern humor in a *Crash Bandicoot* game—how did that happen?

Cortex gives players a wry, scheming antihero who's fun to root for, in stark contrast with the slack-jawed Bandicoot. Cortex also infuses the action with newfound complexity. You'll often control both Cortex and Crash simultaneously, and as long as you're controlling the duo, expect clever puzzles and tricky bosses that require some critical thinking to fell.

So what's the problem? Well, you spend a helluva lot of *Twinsanity* playing as just Crash, and he does precious little that's new. Whether you're avoiding one-hit deaths while running forward into the screen or avoiding one-hit deaths while running blind in chase-cam mode, it's largely the same crap that Bandicoot's been doing for going on a decade. He does try a few new things, including small free-roaming areas that feel like *Jak and Daxter Lite*.

This convoluted platforming mishmash could also use another pass of visual polish. Bland environments and simplistic characters hearken back to Crash's PS1 heyday, frequent slowdown and pop-up mar the screen, and clumsy camera problems occasionally leave you staring at a screen of garbled polygons. Yuck. Likewise, the game's soundtrack will turn the stomach of anyone over the age of 8.

Ultimately, *Twinsanity* is a bummer—it's a tragic tale of missed opportunities, as a funny, engaging platformer shines through the me-too murk. In a season with *Sly 2*, *Jak 3*, and *Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal*, you have no business playing this. « *Shane Bettenhausen*

**PlayStation RATING**

**PROS** Offers a good variety of levels, plus some of the humor is genuinely funny
**CONS** Poor visuals, obnoxious music, and buggy camera aren't quite so funny

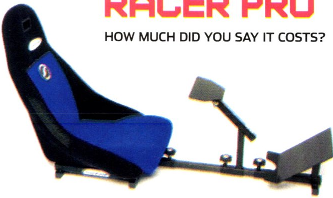
**Pub.** VU Games **Dev.** Traveller's Tales **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

[●●◐○○]

**SHOWING HIS AGE?** March 1995 marked the birth of everyone's favorite bandicoot, who made his game debut in August 1996, in Naughty Dog's first game, *Crash Bandicoot*.

# GAME RACER PRO

## HOW MUCH DID YOU SAY IT COSTS?



**Much to the amusement** of others, I think the idea of a comfortable and realistic racing setup for my racing games is pretty neat, and on paper, at least, the Game Racer Pro has a lot to offer. It has a snug, racing-style seat that feels a bit like a cheap Recaro knockoff, and it has adjustable, sturdy-feeling metal bits to prop your wheel and pedals, too. It's a large thing to have around the house—it weighs just over 40 pounds. Remember that, because it's important for a part of this review, which I'll get to in a moment.

The theory is sound. Geeky, and for dedicated gearheads only, but sound. When you order the thing from www.gameracer.us, they ship it to you in two large boxes, one with the seat in it and the other with all the metal bits for you to bolt together. Here lies the first problem we had: When we followed the instructions, it appeared that either the bolts were too long or the washers weren't thick enough. Or something, because all the parts that were supposed to be stiff and sturdy were, instead, embarrassingly floppy. After about half an hour of messing around, we finally got the thing to sit the way it's supposed to. It still wasn't perfect, but it was usable.

In theory, the setup is designed for any wheel and pedal combo, but it works best with the Logitech one. If you're serious enough about your racing games to want something like this, you better be using a Logitech anyway, because if you're not, you're clearly a fool. Once you're ensconced and playing *Gran Turismo 3*, it's actually a very satisfying and comfortable experience.

Now here's the crazy part. This thing costs $499 plus shipping. Yes. Four. Hundred. And 99. Dollars. American. Remember how much it weighs? Ground shipping to us here in San Francisco is another $84. If you really need your chair quickly, it could be anything up to an additional (gulp) $400 to get the thing to your house. So clearly, it's specifically targeted at people who are insane. « *John Davison*

**PlayStation RATING**

**GOOD STUFF** It's extremely comfortable, and it feels like a real racing-car seat
**BAD STUFF** It didn't bolt together quite right
**INSANE** It costs more than double what you'd expect

**Manufacturer:** Game Racer **MSRP** $499

[●●●○○]

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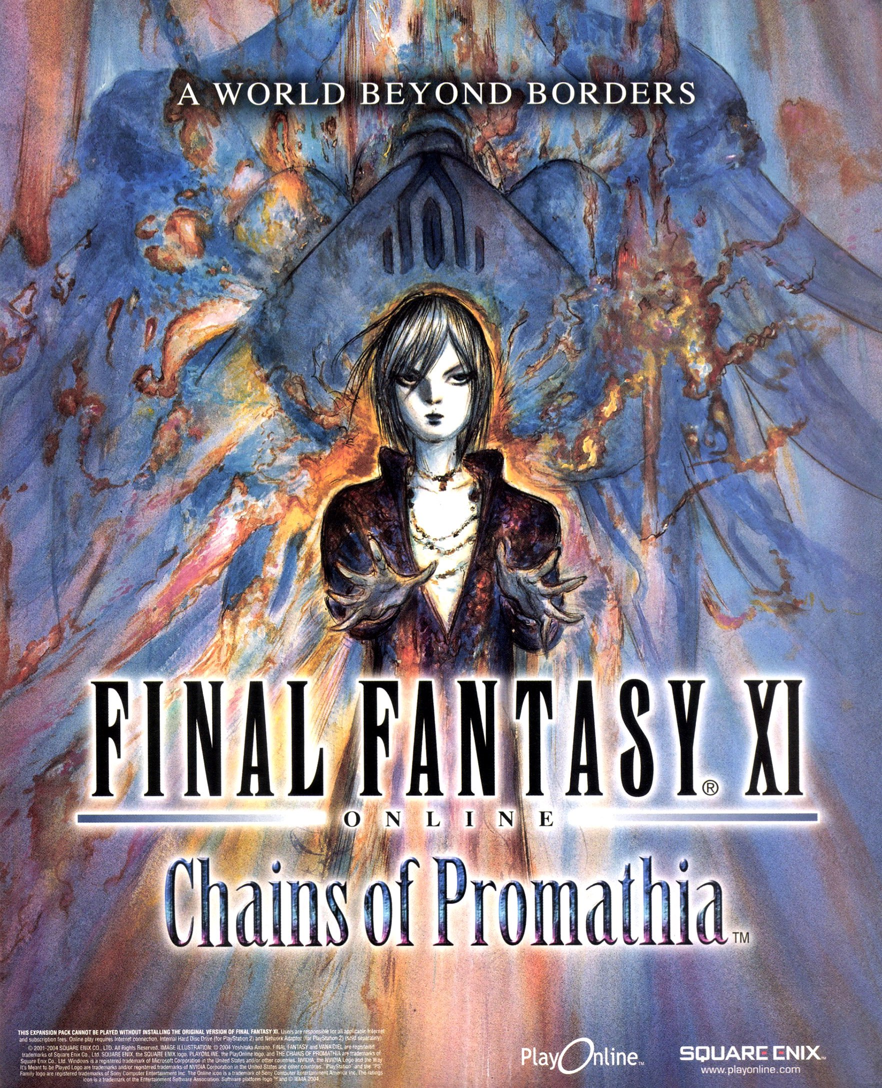

**THIS EXPANSION PACK CANNOT BE PLAYED WITHOUT INSTALLING THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF FINAL FANTASY XI.** Users are responsible for all applicable Internet and subscription fees. Online play requires Internet connection. Internal Hard Disc Drive (for PlayStation 2) and Network Adaptor (for PlayStation 2) (sold separately).

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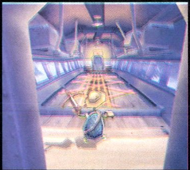
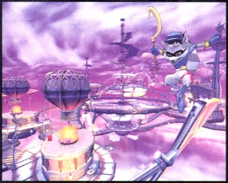
# SLY 2
# BAND OF THIEVES

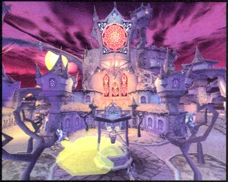
OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

GAME OF THE MONTH

**RACCOONS, TURTLES, AND HIPPOS—OH YAY!**







**In 2002, Sucker Punch** knocked the gaming industry on its heels with the beautifully executed *Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus*. Two years later, the Cooper gang is back and once again hot on the heels of its evil mechanical owl nemesis Clockwerk. The Klaww Gang has taken the individual pieces of Clockwerk and is using them to further its own nefarious actions, and Sly and co. have decided that the only responsible thing to do is collect these parts for themselves so they can ensure that Clockwerk will not rise again. Inspector Carmelita Fox is again hot on their tails, joined by Interpol agent Neyla, and again the chase leads them all around the world.

The game is as beautiful as the last one, with gorgeous cel-shaded graphics. And the levels are more than just pretty—they do a great job of containing the action through excellent design rather than resorting to lazy methods like the invisible barrier. If you can see it, chances are you can get there, and there's usually more than one way to do it. You can also look forward to more great voice acting and a smart script that makes cut-scenes fun to watch instead of leaving you drumming your fingers, impatiently waiting for the action to begin again.

The action is what you'd expect from a platformer, but the game does a great job of varying the missions so tasks keep from being repetitive. And **being able to play as all three three members further fleshes out the mission variety**—I couldn't tell you the last time I've had so much unadulterated fun playing a game. The major complaint about the last game was its length (about 10 hours), and here too Sucker Punch has delivered, with twice the playtime as last time.

The bottles are back and can be collected for cool new moves, but that's not the only way you can increase your bag of tricks. Rather than using the coins you acquire to purchase what amounted to immunity in the last game (your team members now have a more traditional health meter), **this time you can purchase additional moves and weapons** for each character. Buy Bentley a sleep bomb that knocks out all enemies in its radius or get an alarm clock that Sly can throw to distract enemies, allowing him to execute a sneak attack.

The game also includes headset communication, which basically means Bentley talks directly into your ear. While I'm sure it was meant to immerse the player more fully into the game, it's…well…gimmicky at best.

But other than that, let's see…fun, pretty, smart, original. Yeah, that sounds like a game well-deserving of your money. What are you waiting for? *« Dana Jongewaard*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

**GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES**

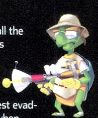
Greater variety of missions, cool new moves, and longer length equal a home run for Sly and his gang.

**Pub.** Sony CEA **Dev.** Sucker Punch **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $39.99

[ ⬢⬢⬢⬢⬢ ]

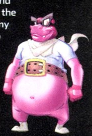
## THE THREE AMIGOS

**BENTLEY**



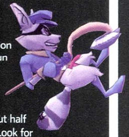
Mastermind of all the plans, everyone's favorite turtle friend is neither speedy nor stealthy. You'll be using your best evading techniques when playing as this guy; a typical mission will focus on hacking mainframes or taking out the enemy's surveillance.

**MURRAY**

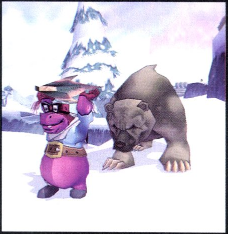


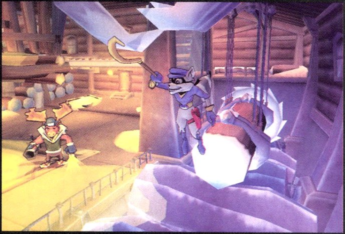
Sheer strength is Murray's forte, and it's fun to run around the levels and beat the tar out of any enemy who has the gall to cross your path. Most of his missions revolve around (yep, you guessed it) brute force.

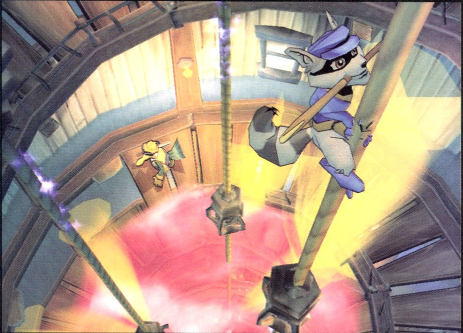
**SLY**



This sneaky raccoon is still the most fun team member to play as, which is good since he's the primary character for about half of the missions. Look for cool new moves—our favorite is a paraglider that allows you to swoop your way across levels.







**THE SHORT VERSION**

If you liked *Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus*, then you won't be disappointed by the sequel. In fact, I recommend you put down this magazine right now and go get it. Yeah, you—go on.

# SECOND SIGHT

## A PSYCHIC STORY WITH BRAINS

**If *Second Sight* had come out** before *Psi-Ops*, this would probably be a very different review. I just want to put that out there right now. *Psi-Ops* did everything right in the control department—all the fundamental gameplay, really—making it a very hard act to follow. That's not to say that *Second Sight* doesn't make an admirable effort, but this is Free Radical's first foray into the adventure genre, after all.

This fact is perhaps most evident in *Second Sight*'s controls. Switching between main character Vattic's different psychic powers or between different weapons is handled via a quick-select menu controlled by the D-pad, which means **you keep getting drawn out of the action as you pause to choose a new power.** (Compare this to *Psi-Ops*, in which all the psychic controls are mapped to different buttons, allowing instantaneous use of any combination of powers.) Making things still more complex is the need to manually target any item you want to exert a power on; bring up telekinesis, for example, and you'll get a little circle around any item you can lift with your mind. Now you have to flip between the possible targets to get the one you want. It's not a huge deal, but compared to the simplicity and elegance of (you guessed it) *Psi-Ops*, it stands out as feeling very clunky.

But there's one area in which *Second Sight* kicks *Psi-Ops*' ass all over the place: story—and its presentation and development. Yes, this is a game with an actual story, a story that's delivered through beautifully animated cinemas, intriguing flashback sequences, and lots and lots of truly fantastic voice work. Moreover, **it's a fascinating story with a killer twist** that's likely to surprise the pants off you.

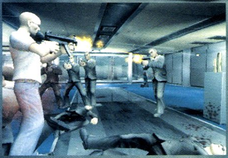
Related to the excellent story is the environmental depth and detail that's becoming a hallmark of Free Radical's games. One cinema shows Vattic killing a guard. Afterward, if you check out his computer, you'll find a chat program where he's been talking to his wife...and she's still online, sending messages like "where did u go?" and "why wont u talk 2 me?" This kind of environmental texture is all over the place, and it really adds to the feeling of a fully fleshed-out world.

Even with the great story and atmosphere, though, I have to give the nod to *Psi-Ops* in terms of overall entertainment value—but it's an extremely close call. If you want to play a psychic superhero, *Psi-Ops* is your game. But if you're looking for a finely crafted, thought-provoking story to go with your psychic phenomena, look no further than *Second Sight*. « *Joe Rybicki*

**BEST OF THE BEST**

Compare the following dialogue with some of the awful writing in *Psi-Ops*.

Col. Starke: Any questions?
Vattic: Yeah: Are you *crazy*?
Col. Starke: No, Dr. Vattic. Any other questions?
Vattic: How did the U.S. government approve something so politically risky?
General: That's classified.
Vattic: Then how did you confirm psychic research?
General: Also classified.
Vattic: [*furious*] Then why do you want me here?
Tex: We don't.



**OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING**

**PROS** Fantastic story, great graphics, wonderfully animated cinemas, excellent voice work
**CONS** Clumsy controls and some camera problems

**Pub.** Codemasters **Dev.** Free Radical **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●●○]

# GROWLANSER™
## GENERATIONS

**When Darkness Comes Salvation is Unleashed At Weapon's Edge**

**Over 80 Hours of Gameplay!**
**TWO Complete Strategy/RPG Games!**
**Secret Characters and Hidden Events!**
**Optional Deluxe Edition with Soundtrack CD!**

054
035
AUTO ATK
090
008
AUTO ATK
071
031
AUTO ATK
058
020
AUTO ATK
PlayStation 2
GROWLANSER
GENERATIONS

Wolfgang
Our time is now! Your presence is merely a trivial detail to be dealt with before our ultimate victory.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Blood
Language
Mild Fantasy Violence

PlayStation®2

WORKING DESIGNS®
*Our games go to 11!*™

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# UNDER THE SKIN

## OH THOSE WACKY JAPANESE!

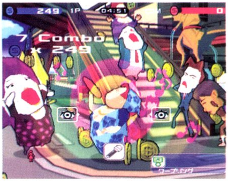
**I'm not sure** if the title of Capcom's wacky alien body-snatching pesterfest refers to the endearing yet frustrating way the game got to me or to the delivery method of whatever hallucinogenic substances were used to create a game that includes cel-shaded aliens, flaming bowling balls, giant hamburgers, and a rampaging tyrannosaurus rex (my favorite!).

*Under the Skin*'s premise seems simple. Mess with the human race and encourage as much on-screen chaos as possible by body-snatching innocent earthlings and employing a slew of bizarre mischief-inducing tools on the suckers. And by bizarre, I'm talking bad karaoke and giant boxing gloves to elephant stampedes and man-eating sharks. What's not so simple? Trying to jump into the game headfirst without knowing what you have to do. With so much mayhem, you'll first want to check out the tutorial featuring the witty alien puppeteer Master Itazura (think Strongbad from Homestar Runner). Once you've got the hang of it, you'll be dishing out pranks and running from the ensuing mob as you build up a coin collection, which is how you graduate from level to level. If you can keep up with the frenetic pace (each level has an additional "panic mode" to add to the madness), you'll be gobbling up coins and giggling like a schoolgirl as you wreak pure havoc.

With nine levels—including a tribute to *Resident Evil* that puts you in Raccoon City with Jill Valentine in a bikini—*Under the Skin* is worth a look, particularly for Capcom fans. Unfortunately, I raced through the story mode in a few hours, eventually finding the gameplay to be repetitive, leading to mixed emotions of fun and frustration all at once. I was hoping to discover new mischief-making devices that would keep me playing out of sheer curiosity, but besides a few special items, the replay factor offered more repetition even in the additional tag and trial modes. I suppose wanting more isn't a bad thing for a quirky little game like this, and for better or worse, it will get under your skin. « *Zoe Flower*

**NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH**

The 1997 British film *Under the Skin*, about a woman whose mother's death sends her reeling into a series of one-night stands, or 2000's novel *Under the Skin*, in which a Scottish woman roams highways in search of manly hitchhikers with big muscles.



**PlayStation RATING**

**GOOD STUFF** Kooky mischief devices will make you laugh, nice 3D cel shading, interesting levels, Master Itazura, Nemesis from *RE3*, panic time

**BAD STUFF** New levels, same gameplay, not enough mischief options, too short, panic time

**Pub.** Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●◐○]

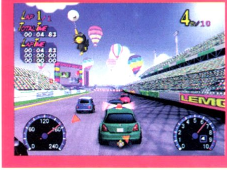
# CHOROQ

## NOT AS KIDDIE AS IT LOOKS

**Although overused** these days, the term "car-PG" is perfectly apt for Takara's latest edition to the *ChoroQ/Penny Racers* franchise. More complex than its forebears, *ChoroQ* is a game with an identity crisis. Its kiddie visuals and toy-based premise make it look like it's aimed at the under-10 crowd, but the lengthy quest mode is far more complex than your average child would have the patience for.

*ChoroQ* falls into a charming middle ground between full-on racers and RPGs, with characters personified by toylike caricatures of cars and races of increasing complexity to work through. Early on, the game seems very much like a simple kart-style racer anchored by a cute story. Once you start moving between the different towns in the game, you soon find a greater sense of purpose for your cute little racer. Early on the tracks are simple ovals and traditional racing fare, but things soon get wacky as you navigate off-road courses and, later, off-world courses with different gravity and zany environmental hazards. The racing alone is strangely addictive, and you can easily get lost in the events without really thinking about the incredibly confusing mission-based story that's ticking over in the background.

It's a very cute little game, but it's mired by its own duality. For me, it became much more enjoyable as something to pick up and play for five or 10 minutes at a time rather than for prolonged sessions, but this is somewhat contrary to the way it's designed. Its story is far too complicated for my taste, and ultimately that was what turned me off. It would be the perfect game for PSP, I'd wager. « *John Davison*



**PlayStation RATING**

**PROS** It's cute, and there's an awful lot of game to play

**CONS** The story is too complicated for a game that seems so simple

**Pub.** Atlus **Dev.** Takara **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $19.99

[●●●◐○]

# GUNGRAVE: OVERDOSE

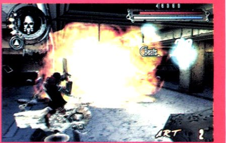
## A MASSIVE OVERDOSE OF ACTION

**For roughly the price** of a Hollywood action feature and items from the concession stand, you get the equivalent amount of entertainment in *Gungrave: Overdose*. While you don't get any food with *Overdose*, you're trading sustenance for a lengthier experience of making things explode via your gunfire.

You don't need to have played the criminally short *Gungrave* to understand this game, as it makes barely a lick of sense either way. All you need to know is that you start at point A and get to point B while shooting everyone in your way. You can do this as Brandon Heat (the coffin-wielding Mafioso from the previous game) or unlockable characters Juji Kabane (a swordsman who's always on fire) and Rocketbilly Redcadillac (a fellow who rocks out with a guitar as a weapon). Both Heat and Kabane are cool, but Redcadillac is particularly gratifying. The enemies you fight can be just as preposterous, ranging from rampaging bulldozers to hotel managers in lethal La-Z-Boys to a sunglasses-wearing mummy that conjures wolves.

Despite the out-and-out wackiness and pure action offered in *Overdose*, some of the good-intentioned improvements backfire on the overall game. Most of the time, you're forced down monotonous corridors, and you'll find yourself wandering open-ended paths that look too similar to each other. Also, there are many confined rooms where the camera goes spastic, especially during boss battles.

If you're a die-hard fan who wanted a longer version of the first game, you're probably already enjoying your new purchase. For others, it depends on the following: If you think "kick their asses" is an acceptable game objective, then drop the 15 bucks. If you desire more, save your $15. « *Thierry Nguyen*



**PlayStation RATING**

**PROS** It's all-out action, a crazily named guy uses a guitar as a weapon, and it's only $15

**CONS** It gets even more repetitive, and there're some camera problems

**Pub.** Mastiff **Dev.** Red Entertainment **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $14.99

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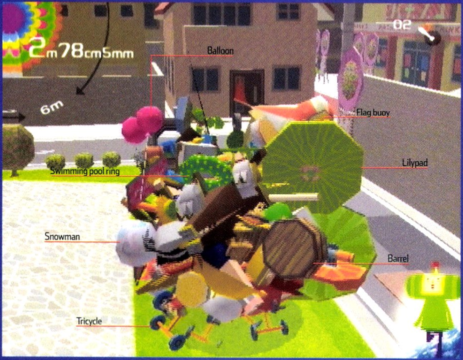


# KATAMARI DAMACY

## LET'S ROLL, AMERICA!

**Your father, the King of All Cosmos,** has knocked the stars out of the sky. You—the Prince—must replace the stars by rolling things up into balls, or *katamari*. Some of the things that you can roll up into your *katamari*:

Pachinko balls, matches, mosquitoes, caramels, butterflies, strawberries, dice, mah-jongg tiles, thumbtacks, erasers, buttons, 9-volt batteries, packs of gum, superglue, lipstick, cherries, dumplings, snails, dried squid, quail eggs, octopus sushi, egg sushi, magnets, parsley, forks, knives, cassette tapes, soap, orange peels, baseballs, teacups, rice bowls, mandarin oranges, mice, Phillips head screwdrivers, milk bottles, canned coffee, morning glories, lightbulbs, mousetraps, mayonnaise, flashlights, hermit crabs, sparklers, toilet paper, air fresheners, piggy banks, coffee mugs, teapots, handcuffs, **Roman candles, coin purses, cabbages,** toast, bottled orange juice, bananas, chocolate bars, envelopes, carrots, maple leaves, garden spades, baseballs, tomatoes, hot plates, pigeons, lollipops, cookie tins, newspapers, walkie-talkies, bowling pins, dishwashing detergent, big pears, squash, birthday cakes, rain boots, bunny slippers, lucky-cat statues, Japanese lanterns, canned pineapple, rice cookers, desk lamps, cuckoo clocks, warning signs, milk cartons, sandals, coffee thermoses, tissues, watermelons, life preservers, briefcases, ice-cube trays, magazines, encyclopedias, welcome mats, blowfish, shoe boxes, crows, toy chests, hoes, Siamese cats, buckets, cutting boards, ceiling lights, hamburgers, dogs with fleas, garden pots, wolves, mailboxes, graffiti, backpacks, brooms, ostrich chicks, crowns, giraffes, red tulips, trophies, hard hats, beach balls, baseball bats, frying pans, kebabs, tricycles, chickens, shovels, globes, bonsai, footballs, stingrays, **penguins, firewood, bear cubs, folding chairs,** sheep, umbrellas, bales of rice, calves, shopping carts, tree stumps, businessmen, schoolboys, pay phones, delivery guys, bikini girls, barrels, shrubbery, rocking horses, sunflowers, snowmen, vending machines, park fences, lampposts, wooden benches, flower beds, lifeguard chairs, judo contestants, log fences, bicycles, sea otters, mermaids, baby turtles, coolers, surfers, logs, lotus leaves, police cadets, televisions, golfers, manhole covers, garbage bags, campfires, clowns, sumo wrestlers, straw hats, masks, gongs, axes, ramen, sea anemones, hams, shrubbery, kerosene tanks, ladders, tires, podiums, delivery trucks, garden sheds—and that's just the beginning.

Start rolling—you won't want to put the controller down. « *Dana Jongewaard*

18m07cm6mm

5cm0mm
10cm

### OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

**WHY YOU SHOULD ROLL OVER TO A STORE RIGHT NOW** Original and addictive gameplay, elegantly simple graphics, and an awesome soundtrack—all for $20

**Pub.** Namco **Dev.** Namco **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $19.99

[●●●●◐]

# TERMINATOR 3: THE REDEMPTION

## YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT—HE'S BACK

**It's election time.** Looking for a way to get involved without wearing a "Rock the Vote" T-shirt? Take the reins of the Governator in *T3: The Redemption*, and you'll play the role of a real politician. But be ready to be further endeared to all things Arnie (crank phone calls, one-liners, *Hercules in New York*).

And the one-liners will pull you back time and again, mostly because they give great insight into how the Governator responds when a Cali Democrat comes up with a nutty idea like funding education or supporting the arts. He simply says (as in the game), "Talk to the hand," or "You're fired."

Thing is, your relationship with Arnie will have to sustain you. The game is very, very hard. The first level can take 15 to 20 tries, each try taking as long as seven minutes. And there are no save points—you'll have to conquer entire levels without a respite.

Still, what it lacks in forgiveness, it makes up for in repetition. Wait, neither of those are good things! The first three very hard missions feature 1) running around on foot shooting on-foot enemies, 2) riding in wheeled machines shooting machines with wheels (or wings), and 3) riding in a helicopter shooting aerial things. Also, you will die, die, and die again.

Blasting is fun, the game looks great, and the front end is on brand. But the difficulty will have you reeling. Try renting to own. « *Todd Zuniga*

**PlayStation RATING**

**GOOD STUFF** If you've always wanted to get inside the head of the Governator, this is your chance—the front end is dazzling

**BAD STUFF** Too repetitive, and some levels demand you do it their way or lose

**Pub.** Atari **Dev.** Paradigm **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●◐○]

# TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 2: BATTLE NEXUS

## I HATE BEING A TURTLE

**It amazes me.** Last year's return of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* was perfectly playable, but three big problems—no four-player support, repetitive voices, and obscene difficulty—turned it into a disappointing annoyance. Konami has fixed these complaints for the sequel. You can even unlock the original arcade classic by playing through it. Yet *Battle Nexus* is so bad that even die-hard *TMNT* fans (e.g., me) will question whether the pain is worth it.

No, you're not restricted to two-player action—*Nexus* offers full Multitap compatibility. Only thing is, everything is way zoomed out to accommodate it, and the resulting gameplay is a complete mess. With four players or one, the view is equally horrible as you hack away to the point of boredom. Worse, you have to stay close to everyone else if you want any chance of actually seeing the attacking Foot and triceratons.

Leonardo no longer repeats "slice and dice" every time you hit Square, but he's harder to control. Annoying jumping puzzles only exacerbate matters—especially the ones that try to be *Ninja Gaiden* and have you jumping from wall to wall. Even so, *Nexus* isn't obscenely difficult. In fact, it's too easy. Tons of stages exist, but few take more than five minutes to complete. Boring.

The original arcade *TMNT* may reward your perseverance—but it's not worth the pain. And that says a lot. « *Chris Baker*

**PlayStation RATING**

**COWABUNGA!** Decent graphics, adapts second season of cartoon, can unlock the original arcade classic game

**BOGUS!** Horrible play control, abhorrent camera angles, painful jumping puzzles, too easy

**Pub.** Konami **Dev.** Konami **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $39.99

[●○○○○]

# ROBOTECH: INVASION

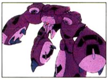
## SHOOT AND REPEAT

**If you're not a *Robotech* fan,** stop reading this. Turn the page right now or read another review because *Invasion* will do nothing for you. There are only about five types of enemies in the game, none of which have much comprehension of what it means to take cover from enemy fire, nor do they use any tactics that suggest they have any sort of decent A.I. Firefights boil down to circle strafing for a few minutes while you unload 100 rounds into invid armor. The ability to change into a motorcycle (thanks to the cyclone armor) is useful, but since it's difficult to maneuver effectively, that usefulness is usually restricted to fleeing.

Guppy
Arturo

But for all of these faults, there's something about *Invasion* that keeps you hooked, assuming you're a *Robotech* fan, of course. Maybe it's the story, which starts off slowly but has enough little twists to keep you interested through the monotony of plowing through countless invid battle pods. However, some of that interest stems from being completely starved for new material based on the *Robotech* universe, no matter how good or bad it is.

If you find the story completely repulsive, there's always the multiplayer mode. It's surprising how much better *Invasion* is when you're playing against opponents with brains or doing battle in environments where the motorcycle proves useful for something beyond running for your life. Unfortunately, the weapons could use a little more balancing since one or two specific types (particularly ones with splash damage) tend to dominate an entire match. Multiplayer isn't really enough to save *Robotech: Invasion*, but fans of *Robotech* might want to check it out just to see a new take on the Invid Wars. « *Giancarlo Varanini*



### WHO ARE THE INVID?

If you're familiar with the Macross Saga part of *Robotech*, then you know about the term "protoculture." Protoculture is supposedly manufactured from a plant taken from the invid homeworld, so the invid want to get it back. In their quest to retrieve it, they annihilate the zentraedi and conquer Earth. Go crab-squid-looking people!

**PlayStation RATING**

**PROS** Story has good moments and multiplayer can be fun

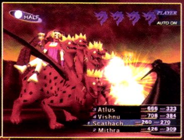
**CONS** Gameplay is pretty dull

**Pub.** Global Star **Dev.** Vicious Cycle **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

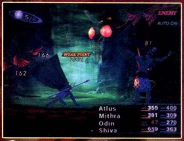
[●●●○○]

# The road to salvation and the path to hell are both paved in blood.

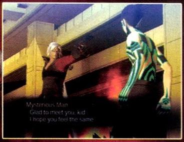
# WHICH WILL YOU WALK?


HALF
PLAYER
AUTO ON
Atlus 666 333
Vishnu 708 384
Scathach 260 270
Mithra 426 309

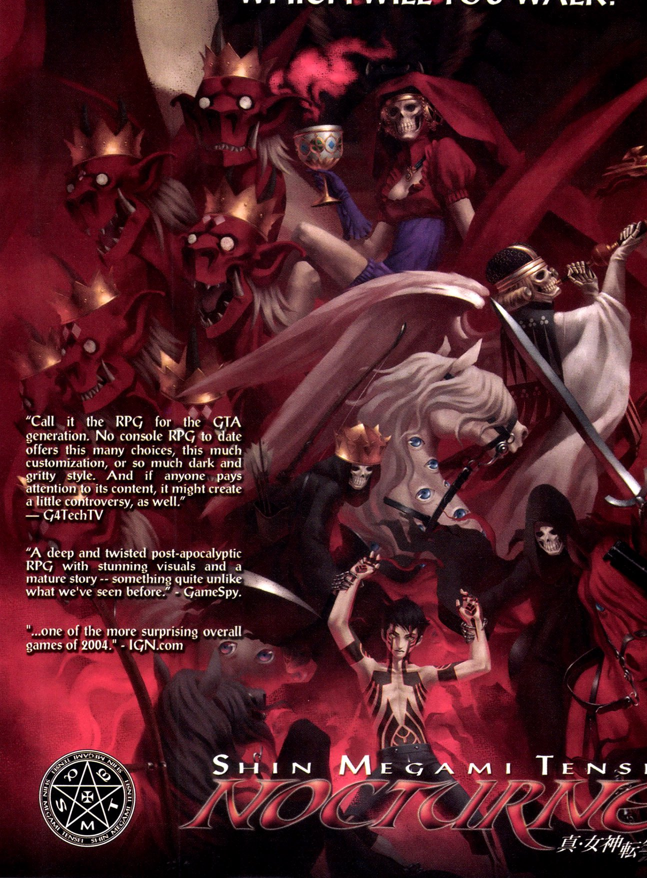
Over 50 hours of gameplay with alternate endings!


ENEMY
AUTO ON
WEAK POINT
166
162
81
Atlus 355 400
Mithra 381 309
Odin 47 270
Shiva 659 363

Customize your character with Magatama, living parasites that grant the host demonic powers!


Mysterious Man
Glad to meet you, kid.
I hope you feel the same.

Persuade over 100 different demons to join your party. Evolve or fuse them to form even more powerful ones.



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— G4TechTV

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"...one of the more surprising overall games of 2004." - IGN.com

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# MONSTER HUNTER

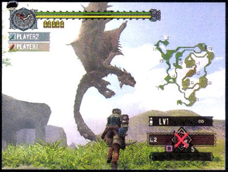
## THE LEATHERY SMELL OF SUCCESS

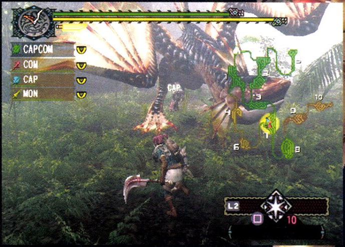
**The worst thing** that can be said about *Phantasy Star Online* is that it was never available on PS2. *Monster Hunter* makes a bold attempt at closing the gap, and for the most part, it succeeds. The premise is simple: Gather yourself up to three other hunters, set off in the wild to forage for materials, and harvest the skin and bones of the monsters you defeat. That's pretty much the entire concept right there, and the game's increasingly difficult tiers of missions and optional quests nudge you in the direction of rarer and more exotic parts with which to craft your armor and weapons.

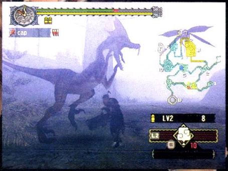
You see, *Monster Hunter* strays from the traditional leveling-up process of games such as *Phantasy Star Online* or *Champions of Norrath*. In those games, skill points are raised with every level gained. In *Monster Hunter*, your relative strength, elemental resistance, and defense and attack power correlate directly to how good your equipment is, adding an urgency to complete the game's many repeatable quests. **Early on, gamers will find the pace slow going,** especially if you're playing solo offline. The first tier of missions gradually educates players on the game's features and controls. For example, learning how to cook stamina-restoring meats forms the crux of one early mission. It's a good way to get acclimated to *Monster Hunter*'s setup, because it takes getting used to.

Unlike most games that map the attack controls to the X or O buttons, *Monster Hunter* attempts to simulate the sensation of swinging huge weapons by placing all the offensive moves on the right analog stick. The DualShock's analog stick is a little too loose to really simulate what they're trying to achieve, though, and it would've been nice to have an alternative control scheme. The frustration of coming to grips with a vaguely responsive arrangement like this is exacerbated by the lack of a *Zelda*-esque lock-on function, which would have alleviated some of the more errant swings and misses you're likely to experience. Still, like all things, this becomes better once you're accustomed to it, but it's far from ideal.

**The reward for all this effort is taking down the game's toughest monsters**, and succeeding in this is easier if you invest some strategy in the game by combining different job types and playing to each character's strengths. If Capcom continues to support this series, we hope the sequel puts more effort into developing the towns and NPCs you interact with. You can see the potential here the instant you set foot in town, but the real fun is found only online. The rest of the elements are merely so-so. « *James Mielke*







The monsters get pretty frickin' huge. To take something like this cuddly fella on the left down, you're going to need to really work together as a team, and play to each character's strengths.

**Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine RATING**

**PROS** Intriguing leveling system, cool items and monsters, great online experience

**CONS** Crazy combat interface takes some getting used to, as does the slow beginning

**Pub.** Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $49.99

[ ●●●●○ ]

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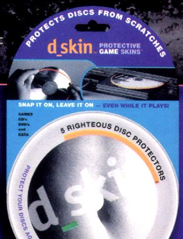
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The page that counts.

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PlayStation
METAL GEAR SOLID 3

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GAME OF THE MONTH

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# FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE

## PLENTY POLISHED, BUT NOT VERY MEMORABLE

**DROW-NING**

Yes, you *Forgotten Realms* freaks, you do get to play as Drizzt Do'urden, never fear. Unfortunately, it's just for segments of one level; it would have been great to be able to use his bad-ass dual-sword acrobatic attacks throughout the whole game.

**Ladies and gentlemen** of the videogame development community, hear me! It is time for us to put to rest a nefarious practice that has gone on for far too long. I speak of cinemas, and more specifically, the ability to skip them.

I don't care how beautiful your graphics are, how good your voice acting is, or how great your lip-synching is. I don't even care how short your cinemas are—if you make me watch the same one 10 times in a row, I'm going to hate you. More important with regard to this review, I'm going to notice every little flaw in your engine—because I'm watching the same cinema for the 10th time in a row, which makes even the most brilliant game try your patience.

And while *Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone* may be a solid hack-n-slasher, it's far from brilliant. That's a shame, really, because **this game has some high production values**. It's obvious a great deal of time and effort was put into creating a highly polished game. Unfortunately, polish isn't everything.

One of my biggest complaints has to do with pacing. There are parts in the game that feel as though the development team spent so much time making the levels look (and sound) fantastic that they didn't have enough time to put in much gameplay. The result is that you'll hit points where you'll just fight wave after wave of enemies in the same general area.

This wouldn't be so irritating if the fighting system had any depth, but in essence, you get only three hand-to-hand combos per character. Now, you do have the ability to switch between characters, and that prevents the game from becoming pitifully shallow. But while switching to long-range magic attacks or short-range stealth kills does offer some diversion, the repetitive nature of either activity makes them wear thin fairly quickly.

And then there's those damn cinemas. Oh, they're good—the facial animation and lip-synching are amazing, the graphics are beautiful, and the voice acting and writing are pretty good. But it doesn't matter. **I don't care what it is, you watch it 30 times in 33 minutes and it starts to get old.**

The ultimate frustration: The ending just isn't worth the effort. You get journals and concept art and such, but they don't hold the same power as the extras in *The Two Towers*. It's nice to go back to the earlier levels and lay waste with your maxed-out characters...for about a level or two. Then you start to wonder why you're still playing. « *Joe Rybicki*

### OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

**PROS** Really beautiful presentation: graphics, sound, animation, and everything.
**CONS** Gets fairly monotonous after awhile, and starts to feel somewhat shallow

**Pub.** Atari **Dev.** Stormfront **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

[ ●●●◐○ ]

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# TIME CRISIS: CRISIS ZONE

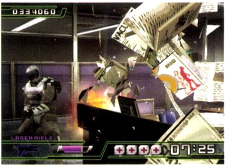
## THE CLOCK IS TICKING

**With a name like** *Time Crisis: Crisis Zone,* could the situation be any more critical?!? Namco's latest Guncon2-compatible game ports a 5-year-old arcade game (the less intensely titled release known simply as *Crisis Zone*) to PS2 and continues to uphold the *Time Crisis* tradition of consistent light-gun superiority. At the same time, however, it fails to impress to the same degree that *Time Crisis 2* and *3* do.

*Zone* features the same basic play mechanics as other *Time Crisis* games but also includes its own unique stylistic elements. If you're familiar with the other titles, you know that you spend much of your time behind cover as you wait for the best time to pop out and shoot by pressing the button at the hilt of the Guncon2—at which time you're open to being shot yourself. In the case of *Zone*, your cover is almost always a bulletproof shield, which doesn't seem as inventive as ducking behind whatever's in the environment.

Which isn't to say there is any less action this time—far from it. Actually, *Zone* may be the most intense *Crisis* to date. You're always shooting at something, with little time to breathe between each on-rails segment. From CD racks and volleyballs in a shopping mall to loaves of bread and works of art in the town square, pretty much everything you see reacts to your shooting it, and every time you hit a wall, you'll see the bullet mark it leaves. You have to love that kind of detail.

You don't have to love its difficulty, though—*Zone* is a hard game, easily the toughest *Crisis* yet. You'll be frustrated, but you'll still be entertained. It isn't worth investing in a Guncon2 just for *Zone*, but give it a go if you've already played through the other *Crisis* games. « *Chris Baker*



PlayStation RATING

**GOOD STUFF** Intense Guncon2 action, destructible environments, solid gameplay mechanics, can use second Guncon2 for other hand
**BAD STUFF** Unforgiving in limited continues, use of shield gets repetitive, only one player
**Pub.** Namco **Dev.** Namco **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $59.99

[●●●◐○]

# FIFA SOCCER 2005

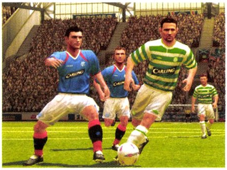
## FINALLY, THE FIFA THAT BEATS WINNING ELEVEN

**The big hook** with the latest *FIFA* is the new "first touch" system. At first, I dismissed EA's hype about the feature, which it's calling the "Fluid Player Kinetic System," as nothing more than something new for the company to babble about in a game series that's already nearly damn perfect. It wasn't until I made a concerted effort to try to make the new feature work to my advantage that I noticed what a difference it makes.

Really great players make their first touch of the ball count, and by incorporating this part of the game into *FIFA*, you now get an experience that feels somehow more "real." There's a perceivable intelligence to the way each of the players interacts with the ball, and at times it's downright spooky. What else is new? Well, there are now 50 bazillion teams, including the one that the kid down the street plays for. No, not really. There are 350 teams, though, and 12,000 licensed players, which is just mind-boggling and vaguely ridiculous when you think about it.

EA has tweaked the off-the-ball system, and it's now much more intuitive than last year's confuse-a-thon, plus there's the added advantage of movement on throw-ins, which is so oddly missing from most soccer games.

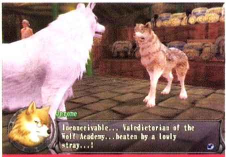
Here's the big question, though...is it better than *Winning Eleven*? That's a tough one. The two franchises are both becoming so unbelievably good that a lot of it comes down to personal taste. For my money, I think I actually like this one better than *Winning Eleven 7. FIFA* is packed with more features than you could possibly explore unless you play nothing but this for the next six months, and for that reason alone, it's more than worthy of a five-out-of-five score. « *John Davison*



PlayStation RATING

**GOOD STUFF** It may actually be better than *Winning Eleven*!
**BAD STUFF** I never thought I'd actually say that out loud
**Pub.** EA Sports **Dev.** EA Sports **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●●●]



Inconceivable... Valedictorian of the Wolf Academy...beaten by a lowly stray...!

# SHADOW HEARTS: COVENANT

## VERGING ON INSANITY

**According to *Shadow Hearts: Covenant*,** World War I was filled with mustard gas, angry Germans, shape-shifting demons, talking wolves, and gay tailors—a historically accurate representation, indeed.

*SHC* is a pretty typical console RPG. Walk around and get into random battles. Loot random chests scattered around. Clear dungeon after dungeon to get the next nugget of story. Occasionally, you can backtrack for optional side quests and whatnot, but overall, the game is quite linear.

What about the combat system? The easiest way to describe it is to call it a timing-focused, turn-based system. After issuing a command, you're shown a circle with highlighted areas and a revolving radius—you have seconds to tap X whenever the radius moves over a highlighted area (the number of successful hits determines the amount of damage). Additionally, you can link party members together and pull off combo attacks.

Gameplay may be somewhat trite, but Nautilus went completely oddball on content—no other RPG right now is this strange. The best character is Joachim, a vampire wrestler who seems inspired by the Tick and constantly talks about his heroic deeds, secret wrestling techniques, and preference for picking up random objects as weapons (including a giant tuna). Ironically enough, the shape-shifting demon turns out to be the most normal character in the entire game. The oddball cast is complemented by dialogue that is quite amusing.

*Shadow Hearts: Covenant* saves itself from mediocrity through sheer force of its oddity. I honestly don't know what to expect next from Nautilus. « *Thierry Nguyen*

**WE TOLD YOU IT WAS WEIRD**

Your main enemy in *Shadow Hearts* is Rasputin—yeah, that Rasputin, the Russian "mad monk" who was murdered because of his undue influence over the Russian royal family. He was also known to be a hit with the ladies.

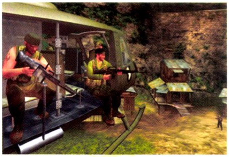
PlayStation RATING

**SPECIAL SECRET GAMING FORMULA**
Three-blarg gameplay plus five-blarg content divided by two equals....
**Pub.** Midway **Dev.** Nautilus **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

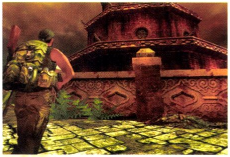
[●●●●○]

Cut off behind enemy lines with no way to contact help, four young, barely trained soldiers realize their only hope for survival is to head into the heart of darkness. With few rations and dwindling ammunition, the only thing separating them from freedom is 100 miles of ruthless terrain, crawling with unseen enemies and filled with hidden booby traps. Welcome to Vietnam.

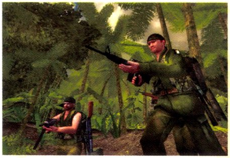
# CONFLICT VIETNAM™



Get behind the wheel of Jeeps, tanks, helicopters, and river boats.



14 enormous missions in jungles, villages, temples, and underground tunnels.



Paranoia inducing enemy AI pits you against foes in the environments they are the masters of.

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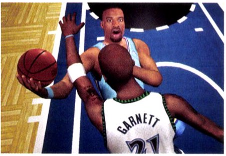
# NBA LIVE 2005

## NOT QUITE A BUZZER BEATER

**Most of the changes** made to *NBA Live*'s gameplay are rather minor in the grand scheme of things, especially when compared to how many new features were introduced in *2004*. Last year's jump stop, which almost guaranteed a dunk every time, is toned down in *2005* and now requires a clear line to the basket if you want to use it effectively. In fact, performing a jump stop in a crowd often results in a turnover and occasionally an offensive foul if you follow it up with a shot. Also, the defense in general has been stepped up a little more, forcing you to work really hard to get the ball down in the paint or to get open on the perimeter for a jumper. Unfortunately, offensive rebounding is still a little spotty since your big players are rarely ever in a good position to grab the ball.



There have also been a few refinements to the dynasty mode, giving you additional information and making it more organized. The calendar system from the older *NBA Live* games returns, and there's a PDA feature that makes it much easier to keep track of what's happening in the league. Additionally, scouting for talented rookies is much more involved, since it's now possible to play them in a 1-on-1 game to measure their skills.

If it sounds like there's not much reason to pay attention to the main game, it's because there isn't. EA Sports has chosen to focus most of its efforts on elements of the NBA All-Star weekend. It has an incredibly fun three-point shootout, as well as the rookie and all-star games, plus a dunk contest. However, it takes far more than just pressing the Dunk button as you would in a normal game. You actually have to use different button combinations along with precise timing to execute a dunk that looks even remotely spectacular, which is much, much harder than it sounds.

Still, it's not a huge feature, making it hard to recommend to those who have *2004*, but it does such a great job of mimicking the flow and feel (albeit a little faster) of basketball that you really can't go wrong. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

**NO CONTEST**

It's too bad that the new NBA All-Star weekend features aren't available in the online portion of the game, seeing that they're perfectly suited for it and there's nothing particularly noteworthy about the online mode this year. Just imagine all the cool tournaments that could've happened for the three-point or dunk contests. Oh well, maybe it'll happen next year.

**PlayStation RATING**

**PROS** Three-point and dunk contests are fun, nice tweaks to dynasty mode
**CONS** Online play needs more, not a whole lot of major changes

**Pub.** EA Sports **Dev.** EA Sports **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●●○]

# TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005

## YOU WON'T WIN A THING IF YOU AIN'T GOT THAT SWING

**Blah blah blah *Tiger Woods*** blah blah analog swing blah blah rocks you like a hurricane blah blah. Honestly, I'm running out of good things to say about these games, because they just keep getting better every year. Since the introduction of the analog swing back in the '*02* edition, the developers of the *Tiger Woods* franchise haven't introduced any earthshaking features...but they haven't really needed to. You may hate the swing system because it can be imprecise or love it because it's so intuitive, but you can't claim it's the same old crap. Well, you could, but you'd be a moron.

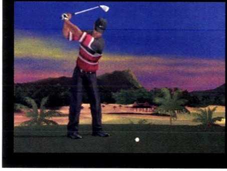
Anyway, don't let all this familiar analog-swing talk mislead you: There's plenty new here to make *Tiger Woods 2005* worth a purchase for any serious—hell, any casual—golf fan. In terms of fundamental gameplay, there's one major addition: TigerVision. Ever get frustrated with gauging the distance to the hole while putting in previous *Tigers*? Now you can pinpoint exactly where you need to aim by calling up TigerVision. It'll cost you—you only get to use it two or three times in a match—but it can turn impossible putts into miracle shots if used judiciously.

Other new features include a deeper create-a-golfer tool, lots of new fantasy courses and fictional golfers, and Tiger-proofing, a method of customizing preexisting courses to earn cash from admiring pros. There's also the "my legend pursuit" mode, in which you try to best the greats of golf history and build up your own stats, bankroll, and prestige in the process.

With all these new additions, I would have loved to have finally seen putting improved. You know, a grid, a yardstick—anything for a better sense of distance on the green. The TigerVision helps, but you get to use it so rarely that it's not quite enough. Because of all this, putting is still pretty frustrating. Add the analog swing, which prompts its own fair share of teeth grinding if your hand's not steady, and you've got the potential for a broken controller or two.

But that's why I love this game, really. It's such a great simulation that there's as big a mental component as in the game of golf itself. « *Joe Rybicki*

| | Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005 | Hot Shots Golf Fore! | Winner |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Driving** | Analog swing is in full effect, making it feel as if you're actually swinging a club. | Tap, tap, tap. Yawn. | *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005* by a mile |
| **Approach** | Generally the same as driving, unless you're pitching or chipping. | Setting your spin before a shot almost balances *Tiger*'s swing. | *Tiger* again, but it's close |
| **Chipping/ Pitching** | A short swing and difficulty reading the green make for unpredictable shots. | Adequate, but not exceptional; more spin control, less intuitive. | Tie |
| **Putting** | TigerVision helps with the franchise's Achilles' heel, but it's still too hard to judge distances. | An excellent overlay grid shows grades and elevations, making it much easier to learn to putt well. | *Hot Shots Golf Fore!* |
| **Online** | EA.com is as good as it gets on PS2: voice chat, buddy lists, all the bells and whistles. | One-on-one matches or tournaments that might as well be solo; supremely underwhelming. | *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005* |
| **Extras** | Course modification, create-a-golfer, sponsorships, posthumous matches with legendary golfers, and a lot more. | Play as Jak or Ratchet, unlock wallpapers and background music (yay?), other wackiness. | No contest: *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005* |
| **Verdict** | If you're at all serious about golf, you owe it to yourself to learn how to use the analog swing; there's no better golf package out there. | Fine for those who don't need much depth in their game or those who can't stand to shank the occasional shot. | *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005* |

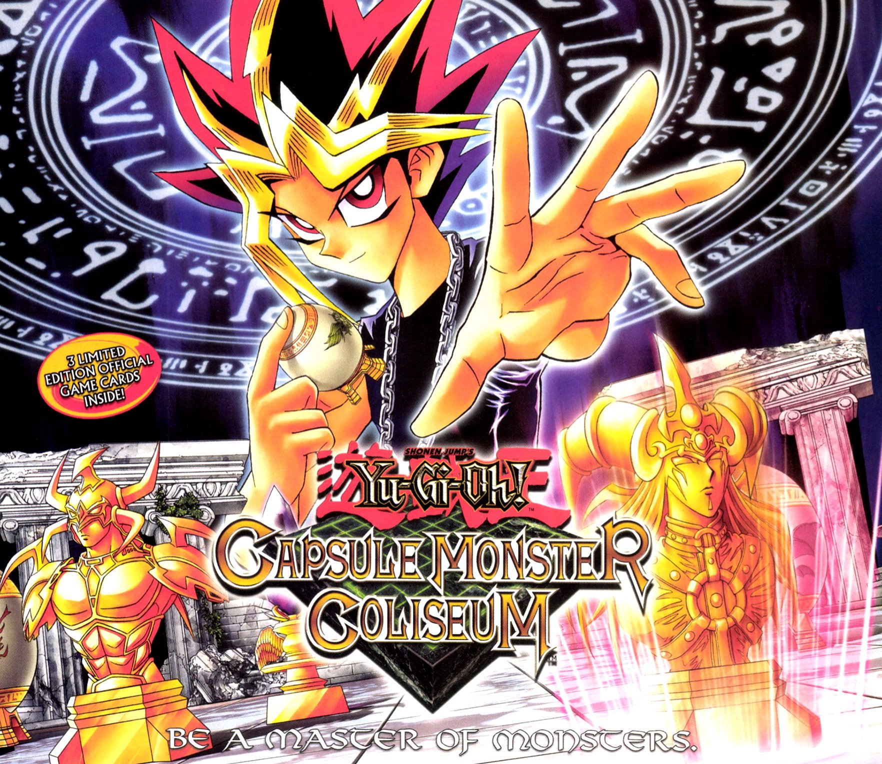


**PlayStation RATING**

**PROS** An unbelievable amount of gameplay, solid online play, plenty of different modes, that delicious analog swing
**CONS** The putting interface still needs work, be really careful on precision shots

**Pub.** EA Sports **Dev.** EA Red. Sh. **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●●◐]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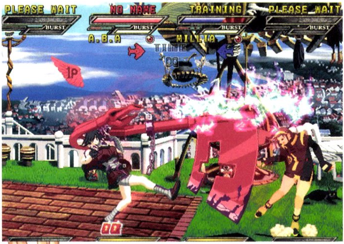

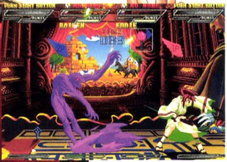

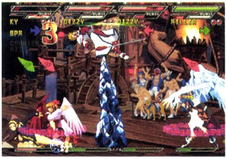

# GUILTY GEAR ISUKA

## A WHOLE LOT OF CRAZY

**It's pretty easy to see** why the *Guilty Gear* series has become a staple of the 2D fighting-game scene—other than for the fact that it's one of the few 2D fighters actually left. For one, the characters are just flat-out absurd. *Isuka* continues the games' trend toward madness with the addition of a few new characters, such as A.B.A., a bandaged girl who carries a massive key around. And not just any key—this is a key that has a mouth and eyes. Their attacks are just as insane as their looks, so much so that you'll be compelled to use each character, if only to witness their wacky antics.

But for a game that seems so different, most of the fighting is fairly standard. In fact, **the gameplay closely resembles that of Capcom's *Vs.* series**: It's fast paced, and button mashers can probably hold their own for a while, but there's a lot to learn, and expert users will quickly have their way with newcomers. However, that balance gets thrown a little out of whack in *Isuka*'s three- or four-character battles. Getting hit from every direction makes it hard to rely on any specific strategy, unless you manage to pin an opponent in a corner, and even then there's usually someone else around who's more than happy to hit you in the back of the head. On top of all that mayhem, you have to manually control the direction your character is facing, and while that sounds like a totally annoying feature, fortunately, you get used to it pretty quickly by training in 1-on-1 fights.

The multiple-character action may not be to your liking, but it occurs only in the main arcade mode, and even then the fights usually involve only three characters. Plus, there are a ton of other features to explore—in particular the GG mode. It's like the Tekken force mode in *Tekken Tag Tournament*, but good. *Guilty Gear*'s button-mashing gameplay fits the *Final Fight*-style structure really well because you don't need a strategy to fight off all the drones you encounter. Another mode, the Robo-Ky II factory, is also pretty interesting since it lets you essentially create your own fighter, an option usually reserved for 3D fighters.

**Most *Guilty Gear* fans will enjoy these new features,** but the incessant manual turning will undoubtedly prove irksome to some, as will the chaos of four-player battles. Still, *Isuka* offers plenty of fun for any fighting-game fan. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

**OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING**

**CRAZY COOL** GG mode, Robo-Ky II factory, good ol' *Guilty Gear* gameplay
**CRAZY BAD** Manual turning, four-player fights get a little too insane

**Pub.** Sammy **Dev.** Ark System Works **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

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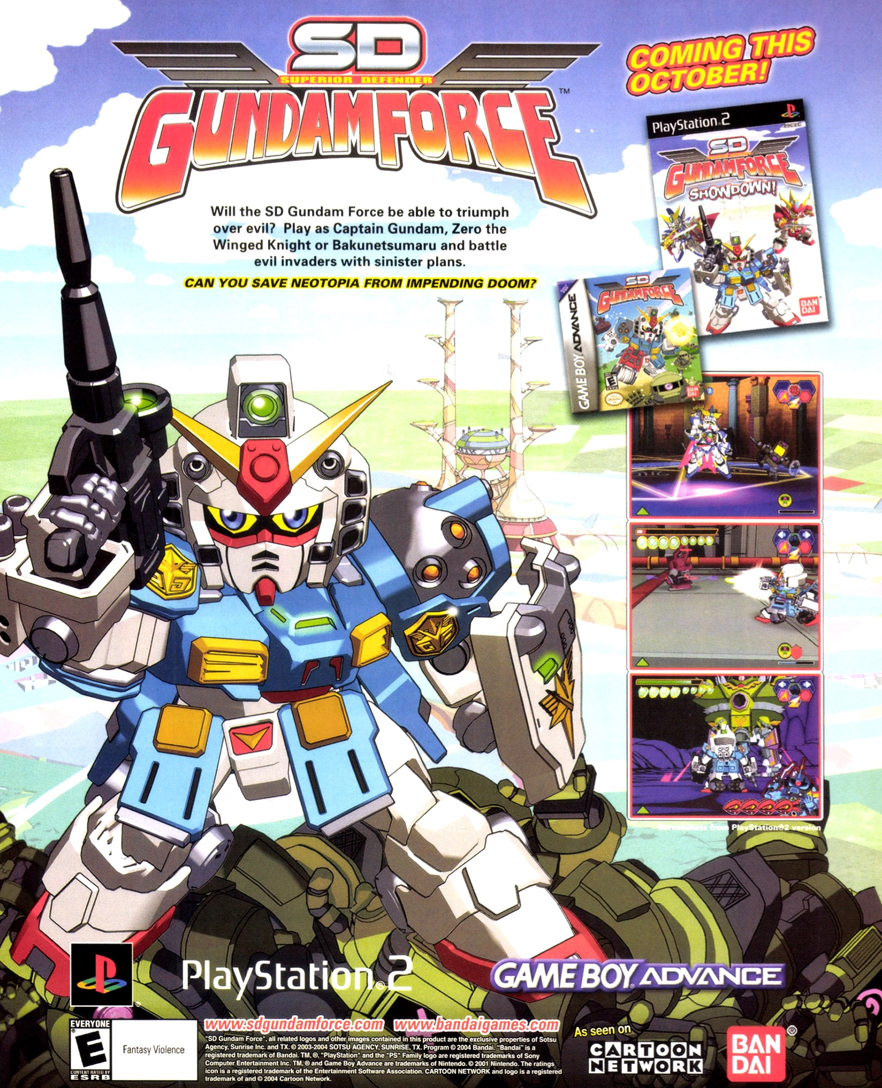
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Fantasy Violence

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by John Scalzi

# FAHRENHEIT 9/11

(Michael Moore, George W. Bush)

**Two predictions for you.** First: If John Kerry is elected president of the United States in November, *Fahrenheit 9/11* will be Oscar-nominated for Best Picture and Best Director. Second: If George W. Bush is re-elected president of the United States in November, *Fahrenheit 9/11* will be nominated for Best Picture and Best Director—and will win at least one, if not both, of those awards. Thus, Michael Moore is faced with a personal decision: Does he want regime change or does he want another Oscar?

This is a rhetorical question, of course: Michael Moore has said he wants regime change and he wants it bad, and there's not a frame of *9/11*, from Bush numbly making it through *My Pet Goat* to the tragic sight of grieving mother Lila Lipscomb in Washington, D.C., that doesn't mock, bite, and inveigh against our 43rd president and what his administration (in Moore's opinion) has wrought. The enemies of the film—and as with any Moore film there are legion—demand that we all recognize the film is unfair toward Bush: This is not a documentary, they seethe. There's no balance.

Well, it *is* a documentary, actually. There's no law that says documentaries have to be fair or evenly balanced. Moore has absolutely no intention of being fair to his film's targets (he does seem to try to be factually accurate, which is not the same thing, although the film's detractors will argue this point as well). He is angry at Bush and wants to share that anger. Given the film's nearly $120 million gross, nearly six times more than the next most successful documentary (also by Moore, incidentally), he's been unusually effective on that score.

I'm skeptical of the film's ability to change minds; personally, I think the film will probably mostly deepen the already-held opinions people have on either side of the fence. But as one man's cinematic howl against the powers that be (which Moore believes should *not* be), *Fahrenheit 9/11* is unprecedented and powerful.

●●●●◐

## ALADDIN SPECIAL EDITION

**(Robin Williams, Gilbert Gottfried)**

I'll share with you a little story: When *Aladdin* came out, Disney trotted out then-animation head Jeff Katzenberg to chat with reporters about the film. During my interview, he asked how I liked *Aladdin.* "I loved it," I said. "It's got a real anarchic feel to it. Like Looney Tunes." This was met with stony silence. But damn it, I still stand by it: Williams' genie is straight out of the Termite Terrace stable, enough so that the film survives the Disneyfied schmalz scenes. It's still one of the best of the recent crop of Disney cartoons—though these days, what's the competition?

●●●●◐

## THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

**(Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal)**

Here's a movie that compels us to ask: If Jake Gyllenhaal were actually to turn into a meatsicle, would anyone really care? The answer: No, not really. Sorry, Jake. Since I have a science education that progressed beyond Bill Nye, I find myself entirely unable to get past this film's central conceit, which has most of the United States turning into an icebox pretty much overnight, thereby apparently causing the film's heroes—scientists who should have smarts—to act as if their brains have been freezer burned. Yes, I know it's a little much to expect smarts from a Roland Emmerich film, and I think the overall message here ("Don't screw up the planet") is a nice one. But give me a break, already.

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## DAWN OF THE DEAD

**(Sarah Polley, Ving Rhames)**

Well, this version of *Dawn of the Dead* looks better than the original 1979 version, directed by George Romero. On the other hand, the 1979 version is smarter. Which pretty much wraps up the difference between movies then and movies now, doesn't it? You know the drill: Zombies show up, and the survivors hide in the mall, perchance to be consumed. The original used the mall as a metaphor for consumerist society; this version, not so much. But if you're in just to ogle zombies, gore, and Sarah Polley (not necessarily in that order), eh, you'll be entertained.

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## REN & STIMPY: THE FIRST AND SECOND SEASONS

**(John Kricfalusi, Billy West)**

Everyone's favorite catlike wad of fur and everyone's favorite manic hairless Chihuahua, together again for more adventures involving mucus and other bodily fluids. It's difficult to see how anyone with even the slightest bit of subversive in them couldn't love the first two seasons of *Ren & Stimpy*, in which creator John Kricfalusi wallowed in effluvia and managed to get Nickelodeon to pay him for it. Serious fans of TV animation can point to this as a turning point, proof that TV animation didn't have to manifestly suck.

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That '70s Show

## THAT '70S SHOW: SEASON ONE

**(Topher Grace, Ashton Kutcher)**

The *Happy Days* of the 21st century (they even both take place in Wisconsin). That's all you need to know. That, and this is the show responsible for foisting Ashton Kutcher unto the nation's consciousness. Normally, that would be enough to make me hate the show and everything about it, but in fact, I'm pleasantly amused by the show's continual goofiness and good cheer, not to mention the round-the-table toke sessions that are a show highlight (for the dialogue, not the bud). Also, Donna (Laura Prepon) makes me feel like a dirty old man. In a good way.

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## WHITE CHICKS

**(Marlon Wayans, Shawn Wayans)**

Two black FBI agents go undercover as the Hilton sisters. You know that's how this was pitched to the suits. Shame on the suits. I don't know how the 12,000 or so Wayans siblings manage to keep working, given their aggregate record of craposity outside of *In Living Color*, but they do (in addition to starring Marlon and Shawn, this is directed by Keenan Ivory). I enjoy a good interracial, intergender comedy as much as the next guy, but the operative word here is not "interracial" or "intergender"—it's "good." And this ain't.

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## SAVED!

**(Mandy Moore, Macaulay Culkin)**

Strange times these are indeed, when the most subversive teen comedy of late takes place in a Christian high school—and that Christianity, per se, is not the target, although a particular brand of Christianity (conform or be viciously attacked) certainly is. I like the film because it's smart in dealing with its characters and because it's a nice, hard slap for two groups: smug Christians and smug non-Christians, both of whom seem sure they know everything about what Christianity is about. Surprise! It's more complicated than that.

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## VAN HELSING

**(Hugh Jackman, Kate Beckinsale)**

The sound of Universal Studios cashing in on its famed horror stable of Dracula, the Wolf Man, and Frankenstein's monster, with Hugh Jackman tossed in as the hero. It's bad, but it's Stephen Sommers bad, which means it's also strangely entertaining. Sommers has a special talent that allows him to take drivel and make it an adequate popcorn experience. I don't know that it's a talent I'd want to have, but then, he's driving around in sports cars and taking meetings with movie stars, and I'm stuck in Ohio writing this. He wins.

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### DVD RELEASES

October 5, 2004

Aladdin: Special Edition
Fahrenheit 9/11
Fairly Oddparents: Channel Chasers
Roswell: Season 2
Saved
SpongeBob SquarePants: Season 2
The Untouchables: Collector's Edition

October 12, 2004

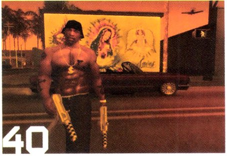
Around the World in 80 Days
CSI: Crime Scene Investigation—Season 4
The Day After Tomorrow
Dream On: Seasons 1 & 2
Raising Helen
Ren & Stimpy: Seasons 1 & 2
Stephen King Presents: Kingdom Hospital
The Wire: Season 1

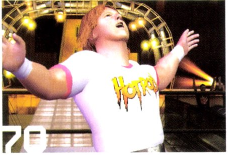
October 19, 2004

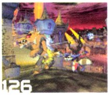
Arrested Development: Season 1
Ed Wood
Greg the Bunny
Godzilla: Collector's Box Set
Helter Skelter
Stargate SG-1: Season 7
Van Helsing

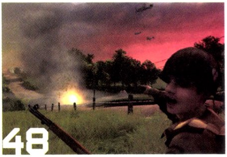
October 26, 2004

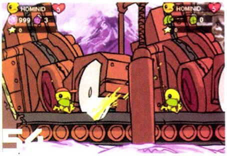
Control Room
Dawn of the Dead
Quantum Leap: Season 2
That '70s Show: Season 1
Viva La Bam: Season 1
White Chicks











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Show us your love by sending virtual puppies to opm@ziffdavis.com.

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The bad guys we love to hate.

**158 DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY**
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Where were you five years ago?

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OPM PRESENTS

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PRODUCTS RANGE FROM EVERYONE TO TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Animated Violence
Mild Fantasy Violence
www.esrb.org

PlayStation®2

KONAMI

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**PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA** Prima Games, leading publisher of gaming guides, provides OPM with top-of-the-line strategies every month. In this issue, Prima's strategy gurus share their expertise on *Burnout 3: Takedown*, *Def Jam Fight for NY*, and *Star Wars Battlefront*.

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KICKING ASS IN HIGH STYLE

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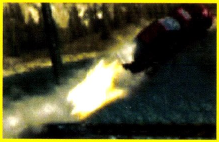
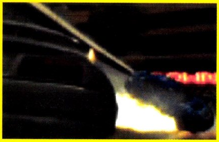
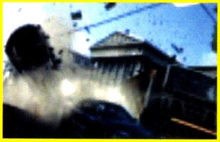
# BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

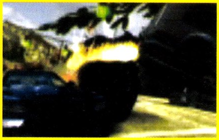
## COLLECT ALL YOUR SIGNATURE TAKEDOWN CARDS

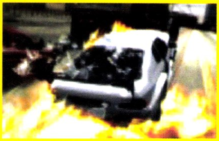
**Signature takedowns** are takedowns earned in any of the various race modes, but in particular locations specified by the chart you see here. Sometimes it takes a few tries—even if you know the exact location to collect a specific takedown card. Be persistent. Collect all 20 signature takedowns and you'll unlock the Oval Racer Special, which is basically a NASCAR racer.

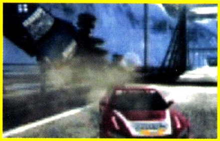

**SILVER LAKE** Knock car over the cliff near the trailer park.

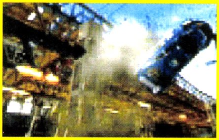

**DOWNTOWN** Slam car into the wall at the tunnel entrance.

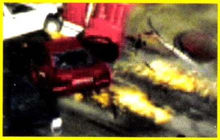

**ANY EUROPE TRACK** Slam car into a snowplow.

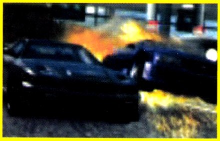

**ANY U.S.A. TRACK** Slam car into any recreational vehicle.

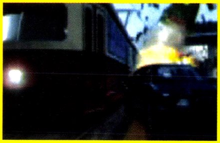

**ANY U.S.A. TRACK** Slam car into any tram.

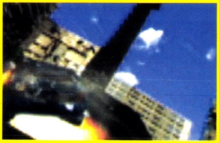

**ALPINE** Knock car over either of the two bridges.

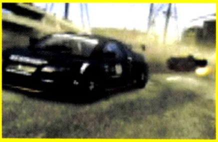

**DOWNTOWN** Slam car into the elevated railway support.


**ANY U.S.A. TRACK** Slam car into any truck carrying a boat.

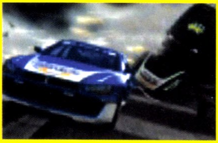

**ALPINE** Slam car into the Alpine tollbooth.


**ANY EUROPE TRACK** Slam car into any tram.

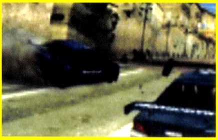

**RIVIERA** Slam car into the Roundabout Monument.



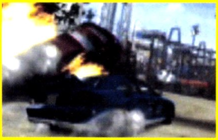
**RIVIERA** Knock car into the Riviera Marina.



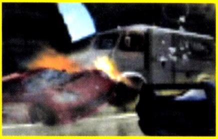
**DOCKSIDE** Slam car into the tunnel support.



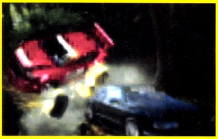
**VINEYARD** Slam car into the gate near the town entrance.



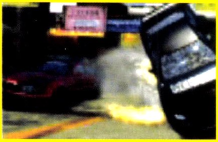
**DOCKSIDE** Knock car into the tanker port.



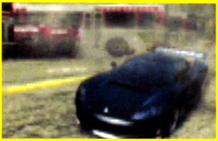
**ANY EUROPE TRACK** Slam car into any wine truck.



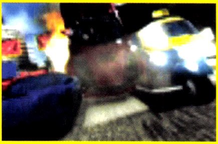
**ISLAND PARADISE** Slam car into trees on off-road route.



**GOLDEN CITY** Slam car into the Golden City Market.



**ISLAND PARADISE** Slam car into a parked tour bus.



**ANY FAR EAST TRACK** Slam car into a motorized rickshaw.

# PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in cyan indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a score of 5 out of 5. ⚡ indicates the game supports online play.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| .hack//INFECTION | Bandai | ●●●◖ | 65 |
| .hack//MUTATION | Bandai | ●●●● | 69 |
| .hack//OUTBREAK | Bandai | ●●●● | 73 |
| .hack//QUARANTINE | Bandai | ●●●● | 76 |
| 18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker | Acclaim | ●●●● | 52 |
| 4x4 EVO | GOD Games | ●●●● | 44 |
| 2002 FIFA World Cup | EA Sports | ●●●● | 58 |
| **Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies** | **Namco** | ●●●●◖ | **51** |
| Activision Anthology | Activision | ●●●● | 64 |
| Aero Elite: Combat Academy | Sega | ●●● | 67 |
| The Adventures of Cookie & Cream | Agetec | ●●●◖ | 44 |
| Aggressive Inline | Acclaim | ●●●●◖ | 59 |
| Airblade | Namco | ●●●● | 53 |
| Airforce Delta Strike | Konami | ●●● | 78 |
| Alias | Acclaim | ●●◖ | 81 |
| Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction | EA Games | ●●●◖ | 72 |
| All-Star Baseball 2002 | Acclaim | ●●●◖ | 44 |
| All-Star Baseball 2003 | Acclaim | ●●●◖ | 56 |
| All-Star Baseball 2004 | Acclaim | ●●● | 67 |
| ⚡ All-Star Baseball 2005 | Acclaim | ●●◖ | 80 |
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| ⚡ Amplitude | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 68 |
| Antz Extreme Racing | Empire | ●◖ | 61 |
| Ape Escape 2 | Ubisoft | ●●●●◖ | 70 |
| Aqua Aqua | 3DO | ●● | 42 |
| Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 70 |
| Arctic Thunder | Midway | ● | 50 |
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| Armored Core 3 | Agetec | ●●●◖ | 61 |
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| **⚡ ATV Offroad Fury 2** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●● | **64** |
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| ⚡ Auto Modellista | Capcom | ●●◖ | 69 |
| Backyard Baseball | Atari | ●●◖ | 81 |
| Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home | Eidos | ●●◖ | 75 |
| **Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance** | **Interplay** | ●●●●◖ | **52** |
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| Barbarian | Titus | ●● | 57 |
| Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament | THQ | ●◖ | 51 |
| Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu | Ubisoft | ●● | 74 |
| Batman: Vengeance | Ubisoft | ●●● | 51 |
| Battle Engine Aquila | Atari | ●●●◖ | 65 |
| Battlestar Galactica | Vivendi Universal | ●●● | 76 |
| Beyond Good & Evil | Ubisoft | ●●●● | 75 |
| Big Mutha Truckers | Empire | ●●● | 71 |
| Bionicle: The Game | EA Games | ●●◖ | 75 |
| Black & Bruised | Majesco | ●●●● | 67 |
| Blade II | Activision | ●● | 62 |
| Blood Omen 2 | Eidos | ●●●◖ | 57 |
| BloodRayne | Majesco | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| Bloody Roar 3 | Activision | ●●●◖ | 47 |
| Bloody Roar 4 | Konami | ● | 75 |
| Blowout | Majesco | ●●● | 77 |
| BMX XXX | Acclaim | ●◖ | 65 |
| Bombastic | Capcom | ●●◖ | 72 |
| Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter | Capcom | ●●●● | 67 |
| Britney's Dance Beat | THQ | ●●●● | 58 |
| The Bouncer | Square EA | ●●● | 42 |
| Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds | Sierra/Fox | ●●●◖ | 73 |
| Bujingai: The Forsaken City | Bam | ●●●● | 82 |
| Burnout | Acclaim | ●●●●◖ | 52 |

# GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY

**One out of** every four games made for next-generation consoles uses RenderWare software to make things run. Here are some of the RenderWare highlights and lowlights for PS2.

## GOOD

### BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

**EA Games**

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We're glad that the company that makes the RenderWare software uses it to such stunning effect in its own games. The previous two *Burnout* games are good, but the third time is definitely the charm for this awesome arcade-racing franchise.

### GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

**Rockstar**

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Consider this the RenderWare poster child. Vast cityscapes! Tons of people meandering about! Lots of opportunities to act in total deviance! If you're reading this to see what is so good about the actual game, man alive, you sure are behind the times!

### NBA BALLERS

**Midway**

●●●●○

At first, *NBA Ballers* seems like a dumb idea since it's based on 1-on-1 basketball. But Midway not only made the concept work, it also brought an entirely new strategic element to hoops.

### RAYMAN 2: REVOLUTION

**Ubisoft**

●●●●●

Taking the lush, unique art style of *Rayman* into 3D wasn't an easy task, but Ubisoft managed to do it somehow. Quirky, charming, and visually arresting, playing *Revolution* is like playing a lovably odd French cartoon. Like there's any other kind.

### TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

**Activision**

●●●●●

We all thought *Tony Hawk 2* looked nice, sure. But when we saw the huge, wide-open areas in *Tony 3*—and saw them drastically change in real time—we knew this new-fangled PS2 thingy was something special.

### WINNING ELEVEN 7

**Konami**

●●●●●

All the *Winning Elevens* on PS2 were built with RenderWare, which means that EA now owns the tech for every decent soccer game in the world. *Winning Eleven 7* kicks ass and is arguably one of the finest sports games of all time.

## BAD

### HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

**Acclaim**

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*Headhunter* is a mediocre multi-genre, bounty-hunting *Metal Gear* knockoff from Sega that boasts some great ideas but suffers from really terrible execution. The game's hero, Jack Wade, is likeable enough, but *Headhunter* is plagued by myriad graphical and A.I. problems.

### SCOOBY-DOO: MYSTERY MAYHEM

**THQ**

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*Mystery Mayhem* isn't necessarily a bad game, especially if you're around 8 years old or you have an affinity for Scoob and the gang. Even then, you can probably beat the game in the time it takes to eat one Scooby Snack. Add to that the mediocre graphics, and this is one game best left to the kiddies or to people who spend a lot of time in their van.

### SONIC HEROES

**Sega**

●●○○○

RenderWare is supposed to work well across all platforms. In theory. *Sonic Heroes*, however, shows that sometimes theories can be proven oh-so-wrong. What is silky smooth on GameCube suddenly becomes spastic and annoying on PS2. The game itself isn't terrible, but the sloppy translation slows Sonic down in this less-than-stellar port.

## UGLY

### ESPN MLS EXTRA TIME

**Konami**

●●○○○

With the exception of a few games, most of Konami's ESPN releases are complete disasters. *MLS Extra Time* really isn't any different since it was leagues behind what the competition was offering at the time.

### SEGA AGES: ALIEN SYNDROME

**Sega**

Not reviewed in *OPM*

Sega decided to remake its 1987 2D *Aliens* knockoff as a 3D shooter and made it really, really, really, really ugly in the process. It's still a pretty sweet game—we particularly like the dual-stick controls, but boy-oh-boy does it look bad.

### STARSKY & HUTCH

**Gotham Games**

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This is a bizarro *GTA*. The city is ugly, the pedestrians look silly, and you're always stuck in a car. If the boring gameplay and the craptacular graphics weren't enough, *Starsky & Hutch* also features some of the worst cut-scenes in history.

### TRIVIAL PURSUIT UNHINGED

**Atari**

●●○○○

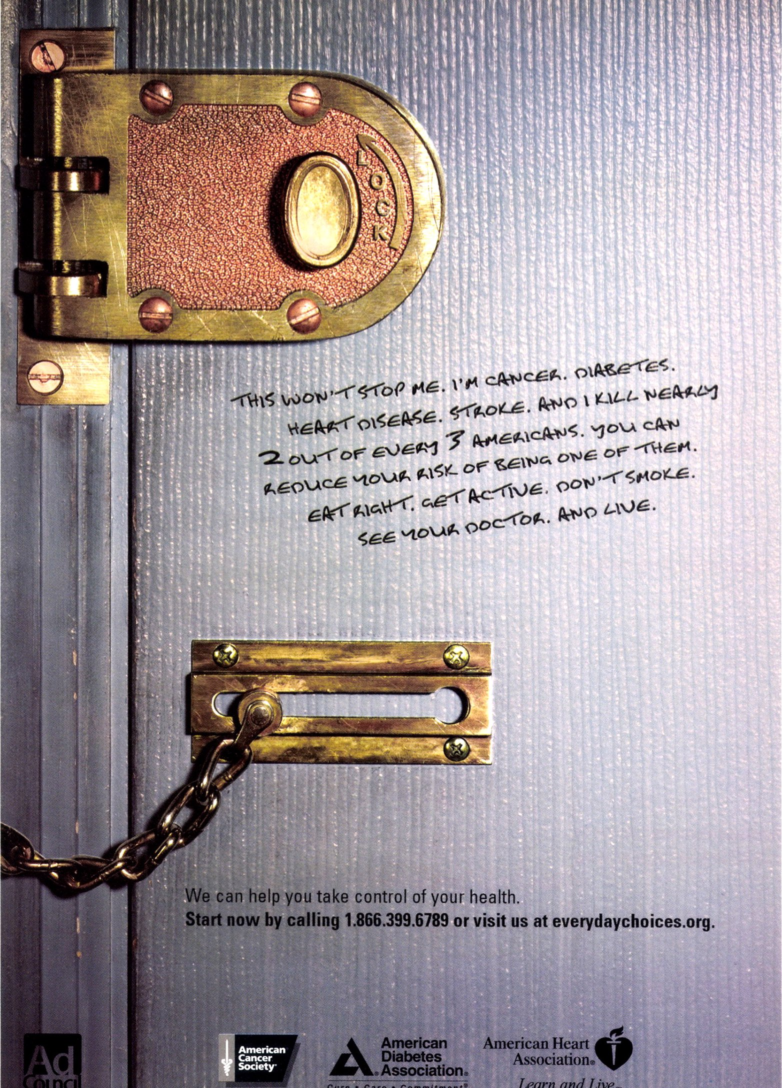
We must confess that we hold a certain admiration for the guys who made this game: It takes talent to take one of the most popular board games of all time and make it unfun. And to make simple 3D inanimate objects look blurry and crappily rendered also takes some skill. Bravo.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Burnout 2: Point of Impact | Acclaim | ●●●● | 63 |
| **⚡Burnout 3: Takedown** | **EA Games** | ●●●●● | **85** |
| Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom! | Crave | ●● | 73 |
| Cabela's Big Game Hunter | Activision | ●●◖ | 67 |
| Cabela's Dangerous Hunts | Activision | ●●◖ | 76 |
| Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season | Activision | ●●◖ | 74 |
| Cabela's Deer Hunt 2005 Season | Activision | ●●●●◖ | 85 |
| Capcom vs. SNK 2 | Capcom | ●●●●◖ | 51 |
| Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums | Bam | ●●◖ | 77 |
| CART Fury | Midway | ● | 47 |
| Casper: Spirit Dimensions | TDK Mediactive | ●●◖ | 50 |
| Castlevania: Lament of Innocence | Konami | ●●●● | 74 |
| The Cat in the Hat | Vivendi Universal | ●● | 76 |
| Catwoman | EA Games | ● | 84 |
| ⚡Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest | Sony Online | ●●●●◖ | 78 |
| Chaos Legion | Capcom | ●●●◖ | 70 |
| ⚡Chessmaster | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 70 |
| Choplifter: Crisis Shield | Xicat | ●●● | 69 |
| City Crisis | Take-Two | ●●● | 48 |
| Clock Tower 3 | Capcom | ●●● | 68 |
| Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers | Acclaim | ●●● | 83 |
| **Colin McRae Rally 3** | **Codemasters** | ●●●●● | **68** |
| Commandos 2: Men of Courage | Eidos | ●● | 62 |
| **Conflict: Desert Storm** | **Gotham Games** | ●◖ | **63** |
| Conflict: Desert Storm II | Gotham Games | ●●● | 74 |
| Conflict Zone | Ubisoft | ●●◖ | 63 |
| Contra: Shattered Soldier | Konami | ●●●●◖ | 64 |
| Corvette | Global Star | ●●●◖ | 81 |
| Cool Boarders 2001 | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 46 |
| **Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex** | **Universal** | ●●●◖ | **51** |
| Crash Nitro Kart | Vivendi Universal | ●●●◖ | 76 |
| **Crazy Taxi** | **Acclaim** | ●●●● | **46** |
| Crimson Sea 2 | Koei | ●●●◖ | 80 |
| Crimson Tears | Capcom | ●●●◖ | 83 |
| Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon | Ubisoft | ●● | 74 |
| Culdcept | SNK | ●●●◖ | 75 |
| Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse | Metro3D | ●◖ | 49 |
| **Dark Cloud** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●◖ | **46** |
| **Dark Cloud 2** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **66** |
| Dark Summit | THQ | ●●●◖ | 52 |
| **Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2** | **Acclaim** | ●●●◖ | **50** |
| DDR Extreme | Konami | ●●●● | 85 |
| DDRMAX | Konami | ●●●● | 63 |
| DDRMAX 2 | Konami | ●●●● | 74 |
| Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore | Tecmo | ●●●●◖ | 39 |
| **Dead to Rights** | **Namco** | ●●● | **65** |
| Def Jam Vendetta | EA Sports Big | ●●●● | 67 |
| Def Jam Fight for NY | EA Games | ●●●●◖ | 85 |
| Defender | Midway | ●●●◖ | 62 |
| ⚡Destruction Derby Arenas | Gathering | ●●◖ | 80 |
| Deus Ex: The Conspiracy | Eidos | ●●●●◖ | 56 |
| **Devil May Cry** | **Capcom** | ●●●●● | **50** |
| Devil May Cry 2 | Capcom | ●●● | 66 |
| Digital Hitz Factory | XS Games | ●●●● | 76 |
| Dino Stalker | Capcom | ●●●◖ | 61 |
| Disaster Report | Agetec | ●●●◖ | 65 |
| Disgaea: Hour of Darkness | Atlus | ●●●● | 72 |
| Disney Golf | EA Games | ●●●● | 61 |
| Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure | Activision | ●●●● | 73 |
| Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows | Ubisoft | ●●◖ | 63 |
| Disney's Treasure Planet | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 64 |
| Dog's Life | Hip Interactive | ●● | 84 |
| Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 42 |
| Downforce | Titus | ●● | 57 |
| Downhill Domination | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 71 |
| Dr. Muto | Midway | ●●◖ | 63 |
| Dragon Ball Z: Budokai | Atari | ●●●◖ | 65 |
| Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2 | Atari | ●●◖ | 76 |
| Dragon Rage | 3DO | ●◖ | 54 |
| Drakan: The Ancients' Gates | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 53 |
| Drakengard | Square Enix | ●● | 78 |

### LEVEL UP YOUR WEAPONS QUICKLY

In story mode Chapter 1, verse 2 on Easy difficulty, equip a weapon with magic that can create an aura around you. Charge the Magic meter, cast the Aura spell, quickly press and hold the R2 button and switch to the weapon you want to level up, then run over all the enemies with the aura. Any enemies you kill with it will earn you points toward the weapon you have equipped.

From the back of a fire-breathing dragon, you will save the day. How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Learn and Live

about from the back of a jet? See below.

**FLY ON A JET** Complete the free mission at Shinjuku to unlock the jet. On any sky mission that lets you choose which dragon to take, highlight Chaos Dragon and press Down. Select it and start your mission—you'll be riding a jet.

**HIT ENEMIES THROUGH A WALL** On any ground mission, find a spot with a wall and enemies on the other side. Do a running charge, and you will strike down the enemies.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| DRIV3R | Atari | ●●●◖ | 83 |
| Driven | Bam | ● | 52 |
| Driving Emotion Type-S | Square EA | ●●◖ | 41 |
| Drome Racers | EA Games | ●●◖ | 64 |
| Dropship | Bam | ●●●● | 57 |
| Dual Hearts | Atlus | ●●● | 61 |
| Dynasty Tactics | Koei | ●●●●◖ | 61 |
| Dynasty Tactics 2 | Koei | ●●●● | 74 |
| Dynasty Warriors 2 | Koei | ●●●● | 38 |
| Dynasty Warriors 3 | Koei | ●●●● | 52 |
| Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends | Koei | ●●●◖ | 65 |
| Dynasty Warriors 4 | Koei | ●●●●◖ | 68 |
| Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends | Koei | ●●●◖ | 75 |
| Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires | Koei | ●●●● | 85 |
| Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future | Acclaim | ●●◖ | 56 |
| Echo Night: Beyond | Agetec | ●●● | 84 |
| Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness | Kemco | ●●◖ | 61 |
| ⚡eJay Clubworld | Crave | ●● | 73 |
| Endgame | Empire | ●● | 59 |
| Enter the Matrix | Atari | ●●● | 71 |
| Ephemeral Fantasia | Konami | ●◖ | 49 |
| **Escape From Monkey Island** | **LucasArts** | ●●●●● | **46** |
| ⚡ESPN College Hoops | ESPN Videogames | ●●●◖ | 76 |
| ESPN International Track & Field | Konami | ●●● | 39 |
| ESPN International Winter Sports 2002 | Konami | ●●●● | 54 |
| ⚡ESPN Major League Baseball | ESPN Videogames | ●●●◖ | 80 |
| ESPN MLS Extra Time | Konami | ●● | 44 |
| ESPN National Hockey Night | Konami | ●◖ | 45 |
| ESPN NBA 2Night | Konami | ●● | 42 |
| ESPN NBA 2Night 2002 | Konami | ●●● | 56 |
| **⚡ESPN NBA Basketball** | **ESPN Videogames** | ●●●●● | **75** |
| ⚡ESPN NFL Football | ESPN Videogames | ●●●●◖ | 72 |
| ⚡ESPN NFL 2K5 | ESPN Videogames | ●●●● | 84 |
| ⚡ESPN NHL Hockey | ESPN Videogames | ●●●●◖ | 73 |
| ⚡ESPN NHL 2K5 | ESPN Videogames | ●●●●◖ | 85 |
| ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding | Konami | ●●● | 41 |
| ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002 | Konami | ●●● | 53 |
| ESPN X Games Skateboarding | Konami | ●●●● | 49 |
| Eternal Ring | Agetec | ●● | 38 |
| Eve of Extinction | Eidos | ●●◖ | 56 |
| Everblue 2 | Capcom | ●●● | 66 |
| Evergrace | Agetec | ●● | 39 |
| ⚡EverQuest Online Adventures | Sony Online | ●●◖ | 66 |
| ⚡EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers | Sony Online | ●●●◖ | 77 |
| Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick | THQ | ●●● | 70 |
| Evil Twin | Ubisoft | ●● | 52 |
| Evolution Skateboarding | Konami | ●●◖ | 63 |
| Evolution Snowboarding | Konami | ● | 65 |
| Extermination | Sony CEA | ●●◖ | 48 |
| Extreme-G III | Acclaim | ●●●● | 50 |
| EyeToy: Groove | Sony CEA | ●●●●◖ | 80 |
| **F1 2001** | **EA Sports** | ●●●●● | **52** |
| F1 2002 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 60 |
| **F1 Career Challenge** | **EA Sports** | ●●●●● | **71** |
| F1 Championship | Ubisoft | ●●●● | 43 |
| F1 Championship Season 2000 | EA Sports | ●●◖ | 41 |
| Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel | Interplay | ●●◖ | 78 |
| Fantavision | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 40 |
| Fatal Frame | Tecmo | ●●●● | 55 |
| Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly | Tecmo | ●●●● | 77 |
| Ferrari F355 Challenge | Sega | ●● | 61 |
| FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 39 |
| FIFA 2002 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 51 |
| **FIFA Soccer 2003** | **EA Sports** | ●●●●● | **63** |
| **⚡FIFA Soccer 2004** | **EA Sports** | ●●●●● | **75** |
| ⚡Fight Night 2004 | EA Sports | ●●●● | 80 |
| Fighter Maker 2 | Agetec | ●◖ | 64 |
| **Final Fantasy X** | **Square EA** | ●●●●● | **53** |
| **Final Fantasy X-2** | **Square Enix USA** | ●●●●● | **75** |
| **⚡Final Fantasy XI** | **Square Enix USA** | ●●●●● | **78** |
| Finding Nemo | THQ | ●●●◖ | 71 |
| Fireblade | Midway | ●●◖ | 59 |
| Fisherman's Challenge | Konami | ●● | 67 |
| Ford Racing 2 | Gotham Games | ●●◖ | 76 |
| Forever Kingdom | Agetec | ●◖ | 53 |
| Formula One 2001 | Sony CEA | ●●◖ | 50 |
| Freaky Flyers | Midway | ●●●◖ | 72 |
| **Freedom Fighters** | **EA Games** | ●●●●● | **73** |
| **Freekstyle** | **EA Sports Big** | ●●●● | **59** |
| Freestyle Metal X | Midway | ●●● | 71 |
| Frequency | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 52 |
| Frogger: The Great Quest | Konami | ●◖ | 53 |
| Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue | Konami | ●●◖ | 76 |
| Front Mission 4 | Square Enix | ●●●● | 82 |
| Fugitive Hunter | Encore | ● | 76 |
| Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge | Acclaim | ●●● | 46 |
| Futurama | Vivendi Universal | ●●◖ | 72 |
| Future Tactics: The Uprising | Crave | ●●●◖ | 81 |
| G1 Jockey 3 | Koei | ●●●◖ | 69 |
| Gadget Racers | Conspiracy | ●●●◖ | 50 |
| Galactic Wrestling Featuring Ultimate Muscle | Bandai | ●●◖ | 82 |
| Galerians: Ash | Sammy | ●◖ | 66 « |
| Gallop Racer | Tecmo | ●● | 48 |
| Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed | Tecmo | ●●● | 69 |
| Gallop Racer 2004 | Tecmo | ●●●● | 85 |
| Gauntlet: Dark Legacy | Midway | ●●●◖ | 46 |
| The Getaway | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 66 |
| Ghosthunter | Namco | ●●◖ | 84 |
| Giants: Citizen Kabuto | Interplay | ●●●◖ | 51 |
| Gitaroo-Man | Koei | ●●●◖ | 53 |
| Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance | Acclaim | ●● | 75 |
| Gladius | LucasArts | ●●●● | 74 |
| Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde | Jaleco | ●●◖ | 76 |
| GoDai: Elemental Force | 3DO | ●◖ | 54 |
| Gradius III and IV | Konami | ●●◖ | 39 |
| Gradius V | Konami | ●●●◖ | 85 |
| **Gran Turismo 3: A-spec** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **46** |
| Grand Prix Challenge | Atari | ●●●◖ | 68 |
| **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City** | **Rockstar** | ●●●●● | **63** |
| **Grand Theft Auto III** | **Rockstar** | ●●●●● | **52** |
| Grandia II | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 53 |
| Grandia Xtreme | Enix | ●●●◖ | 62 |
| Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt | Midway | ◖ | 61 |
| The Great Escape | Gotham Games | ●●●◖ | 72 |
| GTC Africa | Majesco | ●●◖ | 58 |
| Guilty Gear X | Majesco/Sammy | ●●●● | 51 |
| Guilty Gear X2 | Sammy | ●●●● | 66 « |
| Gungrave | Sega | ●●●◖ | 61 |
| Gungriffon Blaze | Working Designs | ●●●◖ | 39 |
| The Guy Game | Gathering | ● | 85 |
| **Half-Life** | **Sierra** | ●●●●● | **51** |
| Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup | EA Games | ●●● | 75 |
| Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone | EA Games | ●◖ | 76 |
| Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets | EA Games | ●●●◖ | 64 |
| Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban | EA Games | ●●●● | 82 |
| Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland | Natsume | ●●●● | 51 |
| Haunted Mansion | TDK | ●●● | 77 |
| Haven: Call of the King | Midway | ●●●◖ | 64 |
| Headhunter | Acclaim | ●●● | 57 |
| Herdy Gerdy | Eidos | ●●● | 56 |
| Heroes of Might and Magic | 3DO | ●●◖ | 46 |
| Hidden Invasion | Conspiracy | ●●● | 60 |
| High Heat MLB 2002 | 3DO | ●●●● | 44 |
| High Heat MLB 2003 | 3DO | ●●●●◖ | 55 |
| **High Heat MLB 2004** | **3DO** | ●●●●● | **67** |
| **Hitman 2: Silent Assassin** | **Eidos** | ●●●●◖ | **63** |
| Hitman: Contracts | Eidos | ●●●●◖ | 81 |

**LEVEL SELECT**

Make the hit on any level with this cheat. No waiting, no preparation, all action. At the Main menu, press ⊗, △, ◎, ⬅, ⬆, ➡, L2, R2.

**LEVEL SKIP AND BECOME A SILENT ASSASSIN**

During gameplay, enter this code: R2, L2, ⬆, ⬇, ⊗, L3, ◎, ⊗, ◎, ⊗.

**BECOME A TRUE PROFESSIONAL**

Turn to Issue 82, page 104 for Prima's Silent Assassin tips.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Hobbit | Vivendi Universal | ●●●◖ | 76 |
| **Hot Shots Golf 3** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●● | **55** |
| ⚡Hot Shots Golf Fore! | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 85 |
| Hot Wheels: Velocity X | THQ | ●●◖ | 64 |
| The Hulk | Vivendi Universal | ●●●● | 70 |
| Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward | Interplay | ●●◖ | 72 |
| Hypersonic Xtreme | Majesco | ●●◖ | 67 |
| I-Ninja | Namco | ●●●◖ | 75 |
| **Ico** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **50** |
| Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb | LucasArts | ●●● | 71 |
| Indy Car Series | Codemasters | ●●● | 71 |
| Intellivision Lives! | Crave | ●●●◖ | 77 |
| Island Extreme Stunts | EA Games | ●●●◖ | 65 |
| The Italian Job | Eidos | ●● | 72 |
| Jade Cocoon 2 | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 53 |
| **Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **52** |
| Jak II | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 74 |
| **James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire** | **EA Games** | ●●●● | **52** |
| James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing | EA Games | ●●●●◖ | 79 |
| James Bond 007: NightFire | Activision | ●●●●◖ | 64 |
| James Cameron's Dark Angel | Sierra | ●● | 65 |
| Jeopardy! | Atari | ●●◖ | 77 |
| Jeremy McGrath Supercross World | Acclaim | ● | 53 |
| Jet X20 | Sony CEA | ●● | 63 |
| Jonny Moseley Mad Trix | 3DO | ●◖ | 54 |
| Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death | Evolved Games | ●●◖ | 80 |
| The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove | Ubisoft | ●●● | 69 |
| Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis | Universal Int. | ●●●●◖ | 68 |
| K-1 World Grand Prix | Konami | ●● | 71 |
| Karaoke Revolution | Konami | ●●●● | 75 |
| Karaoke Revolution Volume 2 | Konami | ●●●●◖ | 83 |
| Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer | Activision | ●●●◖ | 61 |
| Kengo: Master of Bushido | Crave | ●●● | 42 |
| Kessen | EA Games | ●●● | 39 |
| Kessen II | Koei | ●●● | 51 |
| kill.switch | Namco | ●●●●◖ | 75 |
| Kinetica | Sony CEA | ●●●●◖ | 50 |
| The King of Fighters 2000/2001 | Bandai | ●●◖ | 76 |
| The King of Route 66 | Sega | ●●● | 67 |
| King's Field: The Ancient City | Agetec | ●● | 55 |
| Kingdom Hearts | Square EA | ●●●●◖ | 61 |
| Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil | Namco | ●●●●◖ | 47 |
| Knockout Kings 2001 | EA Sports | ●●●● | 42 |
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| La Pucelle: Tactics | Mastiff | ●●●● | 81 |
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| Legion: The Legend of Excalibur | Midway | ●●● | 59 |
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| Looney Tunes: Back in Action | EA Games | ● | 76 |
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| **⚡The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King** | **EA Games** | ●●●●● | **75** |
| Lowrider | Jaleco | ●◖ | 77 |
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| Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter | Vivendi Universal | ●● | 71 |
| Mad Maestro! | Eidos/Fresh | ●●● | 56 |
| Madden NFL 2001 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 38 |
| Madden NFL 2002 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 48 |
| **⚡Madden NFL 2003** | **EA Sports** | ●●●●● | **60** |
| **⚡Madden NFL 2004** | **EA Sports** | ●●●●● | **72** |
| ⚡Madden NFL 2005 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 83 |
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| **Max Payne** | **Rockstar** | ●●●● | **53** |
| Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne | Rockstar | ●●●◖ | 77 |
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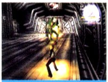

**PSYCHIC FLOP**

You know about *Second Sight* (reviewed this month) and *Psi-Ops*, but do you remember this game of psychic warfare? No? That's probably because it sucks.

**FOUR FRENZY**

In case you were wondering, the most recent *Guilty Gear* game (reviewed this month) also got a 4-blarg score. There's certainly something to be said for consistency.

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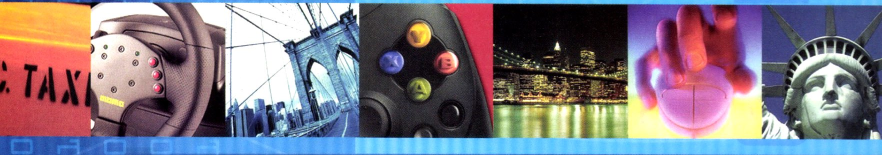

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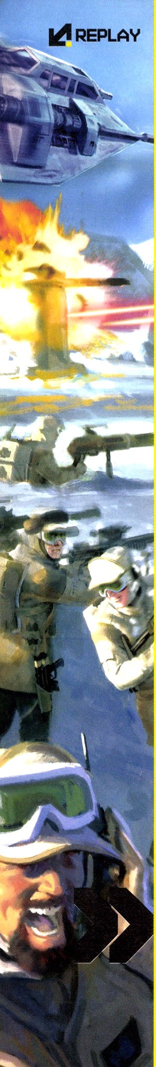
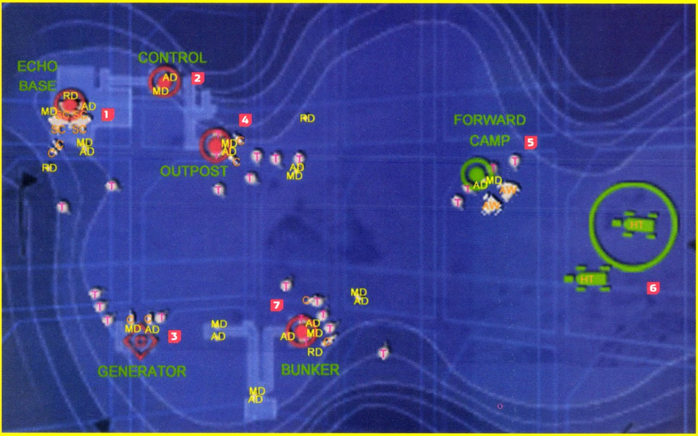


## STAR WARS

# BATTLEFRONT

### ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BATTLING ON HOTH'S ECHO BASE



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### 1 ECHO BASE

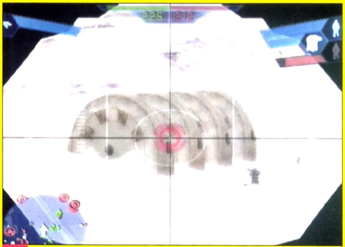
**Rebels** Holding Echo Base is key to victory because it spawns the four T-47 airspeeders needed to confront the AT-AT threat. The post is deep within the hangar surrounded by the airspeeder spawn points, a few droids, and a Corellian transport. These objects provide plenty of cover for defenders, as does the auxiliary hangar to the west. The hangar can be infiltrated through the main entrance to the south or through the western tunnel leading to the Control and Outpost command posts. The hangar also boasts two antivehicle laser cannons useful for protecting the Generator to the south.

**Imperials** Once the Generator is destroyed, send one AT-AT toward the Echo Base hangar while sending the other to assault the Outpost. Use them to pound the Rebel defenses, then spawn troops to assault both command posts. Hitting these two command posts simultaneously forces the Rebels to split their defenses, increasing your chances of successfully infiltrating the base.

### 2 CONTROL

**Rebels** Protecting the Control command post presents a unique challenge for Rebel forces because defenders sit in a cramped room surrounded by consoles. It can be accessed from east and west, so watch the map for attacks from either direction. Spread forces out along the tunnel, using blind corners and mines to set up ambushes.

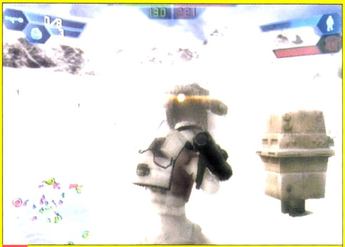
**Imperials** With Echo Base and the Outpost under Imperial control, squeeze the Control command post from the eastern and western ends of the tunnel. Lay siege to this position with AT-ATs and AT-STs until Rebel forces are eliminated.



## 3 GENERATOR

**Rebels** The AT-AT's heavy lasers pose the biggest threat to the Generator, but AT-STs and frequent orbital strikes can also weaken it. The Imperial infantry may even turn the position's own turrets against the Generator, so it's best to keep the Imperial units out of the valley altogether. If the AT-ATs make it this far, a Rebel victory is unlikely, because the Imperials spawn infantry within striking distance of Echo Base and its connecting command posts.

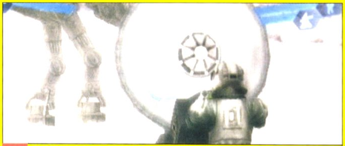
**Imperials** Because it's a destructible spawn point, the Empire can't capture the Generator, but destroying it denies the Rebels a spawn point. Use the AT-STs to suppress the turrets at the Generator command post. If both AT-ATs are in place, they can destroy the Generator quickly. Imperial scouts attacking the Generator can also use orbital strikes. Camp near the ammo droid to the east of the Generator and call in continual attacks while sniping defenders. To inflict the most damage, fly the recon droid to the top of the Generator before calling in the strike.



## 4 OUTPOST

**Rebels** A large hill to the east protects this position from an early assault by Imperial walkers, giving defenders more time to establish defenses. However, Imperial infantry are likely to attack this command post by traversing the same hill to the east. Use the anti-infantry cannons to blast enemy troops, and occupy the eastern trenches to deny the attackers any cover. Turn the turrets on the walkers as they move within range, helping turn attackers away from the Bunker. If the Outpost comes under heavy assault, take cover inside the command post bunker and hold back infantry attacks.

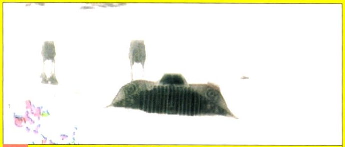
**Imperials** Capturing the Outpost command post gives you a direct path to the Control and Echo Base command posts via the tunnel system to the east. With a combination of the AT-ATs' heavy lasers and the AT-STs, you can make quick, destructive work of all the turrets. Escort the AT-ATs with the AT-STs and shocktroopers to engage the airspeeders with lasers and missiles.



## 5 FORWARD CAMP

**Rebels** Once the AT-ATs are down, use the airspeeders to attack the AT-STs and Imperial positions at the Forward Camp. Try to stage an assault before a new pair of AT-ATs spawns to the east. AT-ATs can't be taken out of the battle completely, so continually patrol their spawn point and wrap their legs with tow cables as soon as they appear. By containing Imperial forces to the east of the Bunker and Outpost, you can inflict heavy casualties while imposing a reinforcement drain.

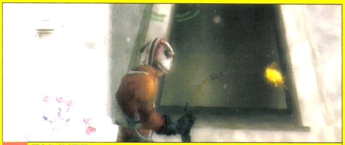
**Imperials** The Forward Camp comes equipped with adequate defenses, but the turrets rotate too slowly to engage incoming tauntauns, so deploy stormtroopers along the trench to defend against rush attacks. The hill to the north also makes a good defensive position—place scouts here to snipe incoming attackers. Holding the Forward Camp is also important in protecting the AT-AT spawn points to the southeast.



## 6 AT-AT SPAWN POINT

**Rebels** Taking out the AT-ATs quickly not only deprives the Imperials of two awesome weapons platforms, but it also wipes two of their spawn points off the map. Begin by assembling your team's best pilots at Echo Base and getting the airspeeders into the air. Focus the rest of your resources at the Bunker and Outpost, manning the turrets to weaken the AT-ATs and AT-STs. Instead of blasting away at the AT-ATs' armor with the airspeeders, use the tow cables to entangle their legs.

**Imperials** Keeping the AT-ATs protected and repaired should be the primary focus of the whole team, at least till Imperial troops can establish a foothold within the Rebel base. Begin by spawning defenders at the Forward Camp, using them to repel any Rebel rush attacks. Meanwhile, move the AT-ATs west, keeping them side by side to discourage tow-cable attacks by Rebel airspeeders.



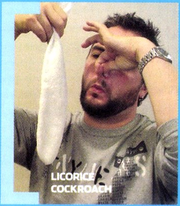
## 7 BUNKER

**Rebels** The Bunker is the first Rebel position the Empire is likely to attack as the AT-ATs make their way west, so Rebel defenders should get to the turrets as soon as possible to begin striking against the AT-ATs and AT-STs. The command post sits in a small bunker, flanked by two anti-infantry laser batteries. Use this small room as a defensive position too, allowing vanguards to fire on incoming attackers while using the nearby ammo droid to replenish their missiles. Mining this room is a good idea, in case the Imperial forces manage to infiltrate the outer defenses. If the Bunker is compromised, fall back into the passage toward the Generator and defend it.

**Imperials** As you move west, remember that the AT-ST is the best option for clearing trenches. Its elevated guns make quick work of cowering Rebels. Use the AT-ATs' heavy lasers to systematically demolish all the turrets at the Bunker command post; once you've captured it, you can make use of the passage to the Generator.

# EATING SNAKES

## THE ONLY PLACE TO GET THAT METAL GEAR DEMO



If you want to play *Snake Eater* before it's out, this magazine is the only way you're going to get your hands on it. If you're a *Metal Gear* fan (and anyone who isn't is clearly insane), you're probably not going to bother looking at this idle chitchat anyway; you're going to get straight to that demo. I could probably say pretty much anything here, and you wouldn't notice. Hey you! You smell like Doritos and socks! See?

On a sad note, this month we say good-bye to three people who will be missed dearly. Bob, C-Bake, and Tina have moved on to work on other projects, where they will be surrounded by people who are presumably more attractive than us. Except Tina, who now spends her days planning the fates of cute talking frogs.

## » MILDLY AMUSING METAL GEAR CODE NAMES FOR ALL «

### JOCKSTRAP WHA-? HUH?

In an effort to be witty and amusing this month, we have replaced our real names with those produced by a *Metal Gear* code-name generator that we found on the fabulous Interweb.

**METICULOUS BLUEBIRD** is rather annoyed by her wussy-sounding spy name. How is being a finicky little fowl going to translate into anything cool? How tough can you be with a name like that? She's decided that she doesn't like this game and isn't going to play anymore. Just kidding.

**JOCKSTRAP STALLION** got his start in espionage at an early age. Through the strategic use of mirrors, carefully drilled pinholes, and camera obscura, he monitored activities at his family's place of business. Then his dad found the hole in the basement paneling, and he was grounded.

**LOGICAL RACCOON** may not look like much, but he can logically root through your garbage to find out your dirty secrets, and he has eaten many an alligator (but not a snake). His greatest contribution to FOXHOUND is the revelation of the latest and greatest shirt-folding technique, which has spread through the office like fleas.

**LOVABLE MONGOOSE** wants to know what the hell kind of superspy badass name is Lovable Mongoose. When was the last time a mongoose did anything cool? But, they do eat snakes, and there's a special brand of BMX bikes called Mongoose, so that's enough to make Giancarlo happy.

**INFAMOUS CARIBOU** is wanted primarily for his badass design of this month's issue, which he laid out practically single-handedly. Questions? Comments? Complaints? Well, you'd better not send them his way, because his lack of sleep might trigger him to snap your scrawny neck with his bare hands.

**DAGGER SCORPION** has been captured by the enemy, and despite valiant attempts at escape, his return as an *OPM* editor seems unlikely (though he may still smuggle in the occasional opinionated message). The last thing we heard him say: "Tell the readers I love them. They haven't heard the last of me!"

**KATANA CENTIPEDE** (aka Zoe Flower) is a fierce genome soldier who moonlights as a camouflage couture designer. When she's not assassinating her opponents, she likes to practice her stealth moves on Solid Snake in the hopes he'll one day use his sleeper hold on her...and maybe even invite her to go camping.

**JUDO BULLFROG** Hidden away in the south of France (aka Toronto), Judo Bullfrog (aka Todd Zuniga) has no time to write a bio because he's (still!) too delighted to be playing *Deer Hunt 2005*, which he's using to pass the time while waiting impatiently for his first-ever import game: *Winning Eleven 8.*

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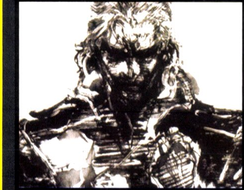
# 20 MOST DASTARDLY VILLAINS

FEEL LIKE RIDDING THE WORLD OF EVIL? ALLOW US TO OFFER SOME PRIME CANDIDATES FOR ELIMINATION



### LIQUID SNAKE Metal Gear Solid franchise

Liquid Snake is already badass since he has the same supersoldier genes as his twin, Solid Snake, but the fact that he lives on through a severed arm attached to Ocelot's body makes him extra special.

### ANUBIS (NOHMAN) Zone of the Enders: 2nd Runner

The ancient Egyptian god of death rocks, but he rocks even more when he's a giant robot that wipes the floor with other giant robots, then uses them to spit-polish his shiny robot feet.

### HEIHACHI MISHIMA Tekken franchise

OK, so he has funny hair and occasionally fights wearing a diaper, but the head honcho of the Iron Fist Tournament threw his own son into a volcano and shot his grandson. He's not a nice guy.

### UMBRELLA CORP. Resident Evil franchise

It's amazing that the Umbrella Corporation remains in business, considering how many times it has screwed up. But you have to admire its tenacity, even if it infects millions with a horrible virus.

### SWEET TOOTH Twisted Metal franchise

Everyone already knows that clowns are horrible, monstrous beings created by Satan to serve his every evil wish. A clown driving an ice-cream truck equipped with missiles is that much more sinister.

### DEVIL CAR Ridge Racer

If you reached the end of *Ridge Racer*, you had to race against a mysterious black car that has the best top-speed rating and rarely makes mistakes. It takes serious skill to win that race.

### UNICRON Transformers

He eats planets! How many other villains do you know who can do that? Plus, he has big robot horns when he is in robot mode, and as we all know, big horns equal immense evilness.

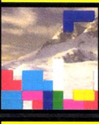
### KAIN Legacy of Kain franchise

Kain's not really a bad guy—he's just misunderstood. All he wants to do is preserve the vampire bloodline, and if that means exterminating all humans in existence, well, so be it.

### DRACULA Castlevania franchise

The king of all vampires wears puffy shirts, throws bats made out of fire, and comes back to life every 100 years or so, even though the Belmont family has destroyed him about 18 bajillion times.

### L-BLOCK Tetris



Why can't you be more like other *Tetris* blocks? You can tell them what to do and where to go, and they don't question you for a second. But you, L-block, you just don't fit in as well as they do.

### INFERNO Soul Edge, Soul Calibur II

The keeper of the Soul Edge blade is far more sinister than other skeletons: He knows the fighting style of each *Soul Calibur* character, so he can do much more than sit there and be on fire.

### LECHUCK Escape From Monkey Island

What makes LeChuck a special pirate is that he is more than just a pirate: He also happens to be a ghost, a demon, a zombie, an amusement-park owner, and a giant monkey-fighting statue.

### NOBUNAGA Onimusha franchise

History tells us Nobunaga sought to revolutionize Japan's military, economic, and political systems. Silly history! Nobunaga is *actually* a demon warlord who uses lesser demons to conquer all in his path.

### LANCE Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

This one hurts the most. He was your comrade-in-arms, then he decided to cut himself a bigger slice by trying to clip you. Betrayal is the lowest form of villainy. Iron Fist to your Power Man.

### PLANKTON SpongeBob SquarePants franchise

Don't judge this fellow by his wee size. Plankton creates killer robots and frames Mister Krabs on kidnapping charges just so he can take over a burger joint. He's one wily little protozoan.

### CLOCKWERK Sly Cooper franchise

Owls are a harmless lot in general, but all bets are off when it comes to mechanical owls. Not only did Clockwerk kill Sly's dad to get a book about raccoons, but he is also being reassembled in Sly's latest caper.

### INNORUUK EverQuest franchise

It's pretty hard to top the title "Prince of Hate" for dastardliness. You know those trolls and dark elves that spread hatemongering and lack of manners all over the place? Those are the toys he created.

### OSAMA BIN LADEN Fugitive Hunter

Besides being on the real-world FBI's most wanted list, OBL is also a key part of *Fugitive Hunter*. Despite looking as decrepit as the cave he lives in, OBL can fight like a spry young martial arts champion.

### THE VIZIER Prince of Persia franchise

First, the Vizier kidnaps the Sultan's daughter and forces the Prince to endure a castle full of traps. Now, just because the Prince took a fancy dagger he wanted, he makes the Prince turn everyone into sand.

### SEPHIROTH Final Fantasy VII

As everyone openly wept at the death of Aeris, it is only fitting that we decry the existence of the man who killed her. Some of us still don't think Sephiroth deserves all the gushing, but he *was* a right bastard.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| ⚡Medal of Honor: Rising Sun | EA Games | ●●●◖ | 76 |
| Mega Man Anniversary Collection | Capcom | ●●●◖ | 83 |
| Mega Man X7 | Capcom | ●●●◖ | 74 |
| Men in Black II: Alien Escape | Infogrames | ●●◖ | 60 |
| Metal Arms: Glitch in the System | Vivendi Universal | ●●●● | 75 |
| Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty | Konami | ●●●●● | 51 |
| Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance | Konami | ●●●●● | 67 |
| Metropolismania | Natsume | ●●● | 61 |
| Midnight Club | Rockstar | ●●●● | 39 |
| ⚡Midnight Club II | Rockstar | ●●●●● | 67 |
| Midway Arcade Treasures | Midway | ●●●◖ | 76 |
| Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing | Codemasters | ● | 58 |
| Minority Report | Activision | ●●◖ | 65 |
| Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma | Atari | ●● | 77 |
| Mister Mosquito | Eidos/Fresh | ●●●◖ | 56 |
| MLB 2004 | Sony CEA | ●●● | 67 |
| ⚡MLB 2005 | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 80 |
| MLB SlugFest 20-03 | Midway | ●●●● | 59 |
| MLB SlugFest 20-04 | Midway | ●●●● | 67 |
| ⚡MLB SlugFest: Loaded | Midway | ●●●◖ | 83 |
| Mobile Light Force 2 | XS Games | ●●●◖ | 69 |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space | Bandai | ● | 75 |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon | Bandai | ●●●◖ | 61 |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo | Bandai | ● | 48 |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front | Bandai | ●●● | 54 |
| Mojo! | Crave | ●●◖ | 73 |
| Monopoly Party | Infogrames | ●●● | 65 |
| Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal | Ubisoft | ●●◖ | 77 |
| Monster Rancher 3 | Tecmo | ●●●● | 50 |
| Monster Rancher 4 | Tecmo | ●●●◖ | 75 |
| Monsters, Inc. | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 55 |
| Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance | Midway | ●●●● | 64 |
| MotoGP | Namco | ●●●● | 39 |
| MotoGP2 | Namco | ●●●●◖ | 53 |
| MotoGP3 | Namco | ●●●●◖ | 67 |
| Motor Mayhem | Infogrames | ●●● | 47 |
| MTV Music Generator 2 | Codemasters | ●●● | 46 |
| MTV Music Generator 3: This Is the Remix | Codemasters | ●●●◖ | 82 |
| MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch | Gotham Games | ●◖ | 76 |
| ⚡MTX: Mototrax | Activision | ●●◖ | 80 |
| The Mummy Returns | Universal | ●◖ | 52 |
| Music Maker | Magix | ●●●● | 69 |
| MVP Baseball 2003 | EA Sports | ●●●◖ | 67 |
| ⚡MVP Baseball 2004 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 80 |

### POINTLESS BUT FUN

As if the San Francisco Giants didn't have them all already, here is a code to get you the worst player ever, plus a code for a hat to fit A-Rod's head.

**WORST BASEBALL PLAYER EVER**

Create a new character with the name Erik Kiss.

**HUGE BASEBALL CAP**

Enter the name John Prosen.

**BAT WITH HUGE BAT**

Enter the name Jacob Paterson.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael | THQ | ●●●● | 47 |
| MX Rider | Infogrames | ●●●◖ | 52 |
| MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael | THQ | ●●●◖ | 59 |
| ⚡My Street | Sony CEA | ●●● | 67 |
| Myst III: Exile | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| Mystic Heroes | Koei | ●●◖ | 64 |
| MX Unleashed | THQ | ●●● | 79 |
| Namco Museum | Namco | ●●●◖ | 53 |
| NASCAR 2001 | EA Sports | ●●◖ | 40 |
| ⚡NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup | EA Sports | ●●●●● | 85 |
| NASCAR Heat | Infogrames | ●●●● | 47 |
| NASCAR Thunder 2002 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 51 |
| NASCAR Thunder 2003 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 62 |
| ⚡NASCAR Thunder 2004 | EA Sports | ●●●●● | 73 |
| NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona | Infogrames | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| Naval Ops: Warship Gunner | Koei | ●●● | 71 |
| NBA 2K2 | Sega Sports | ●●●●● | 53 |
| ⚡NBA 2K3 | Sega Sports | ●●●●● | 63 |
| NBA Ballers | Midway Sports | ●●●● | 80 |
| NBA Hoopz | Midway | ●●● | 44 |
| NBA Jam 2004 | Acclaim | ●●◖ | 75 |
| NBA Live 2001 | EA Sports | ●●● | 42 |
| NBA Live 2002 | EA Sports | ●●◖ | 51 |
| ⚡NBA Live 2003 | EA Sports | ●●●● | 63 |
| ⚡NBA Live 2004 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 75 |
| NBA ShootOut 2001 | Sony CEA | ●●◖ | 44 |
| NBA ShootOut 2003 | Sony CEA | ●●● | 63 |
| ⚡NBA ShootOut 2004 | Sony CEA | ●●● | 75 |
| NBA Starting Five | Konami | ●●◖ | 63 |
| NBA Street | EA Sports Big | ●●●●● | 47 |
| NBA Street Vol. 2 | EA Sports Big | ●●●●● | 68 |
| ⚡NCAA College Basketball 2K3 | Sega Sports | ●●●● | 64 |
| NCAA College Football 2K3 | Sega Sports | ●●◖ | 60 |
| NCAA Final Four 2001 | Sony CEA | ● | 41 |
| NCAA Final Four 2002 | Sony CEA | ●◖ | 52 |
| NCAA Final Four 2003 | Sony CEA | ●●◖ | 64 |
| ⚡NCAA Final Four 2004 | Sony CEA | ●● | 76 |
| NCAA Football 2002 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 48 |
| NCAA Football 2003 | EA Sports | ●●●●● | 60 |
| ⚡NCAA Football 2004 | EA Sports | ●●●●● | 71 |
| ⚡NCAA Football 2005 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 83 |
| NCAA GameBreaker 2001 | Sony CEA | ●◖ | 41 |
| NCAA GameBreaker 2003 | Sony CEA | ●● | 61 |
| ⚡NCAA GameBreaker 2004 | Sony CEA | ●●◖ | 73 |
| NCAA March Madness 2002 | EA Sports | ●●● | 53 |
| NCAA March Madness 2003 | EA Sports | ●●● | 64 |
| ⚡NCAA March Madness 2004 | EA Sports | ●●●● | 76 |
| Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 | EA Games | ●●●●● | 62 |
| ⚡Need for Speed Underground | EA Games | ●●●●◖ | 76 |
| NFL 2K2 | Sega Sports | ●●●◖ | 52 |
| ⚡NFL 2K3 | Sega Sports | ●●●●◖ | 60 |
| NFL Blitz 20-02 | Midway | ●●●● | 55 |
| NFL Blitz 20-03 | Midway | ●●●◖ | 60 |
| ⚡NFL Blitz Pro | Midway Sports | ●●● | 74 |
| NFL GameDay 2001 | Sony CEA | ● | 40 |
| NFL GameDay 2002 | Sony CEA | ●◖ | 53 |
| ⚡NFL GameDay 2003 | Sony CEA | ●●◖ | 61 |
| ⚡NFL GameDay 2004 | Sony CEA | ●●● | 73 |
| NFL Quarterback Club 2001 | Acclaim | ●●◖ | 50 |
| ⚡NFL Street | EA Sports Big | ●●●●◖ | 78 |
| NHL 2001 | EA Sports | ●●●● | 38 |
| NHL 2002 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 50 |
| NHL 2003 | EA Sports | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| ⚡NHL 2004 | EA Sports | ●●●● | 73 |
| ⚡NHL 2005 | EA Sports | ●●●◖ | 85 |
| NHL 2K3 | Sega Sports | ●●●●● | 64 |
| NHL FaceOff 2001 | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 43 |
| NHL FaceOff 2003 | Sony CEA | ●● | 64 |
| NHL Hitz 20-02 | Midway | ●●●● | 51 |
| NHL Hitz 20-03 | Midway | ●●●●◖ | 62 |
| ⚡NHL Hitz Pro | Midway | ●●●● | 73 |
| Ninja Assault | Namco | ●●◖ | 61 |
| No One Lives Forever | Sierra | ●●●◖ | 56 |
| Okage: Shadow King | Sony CEA | ●●● | 51 |
| Oni | Rockstar | ●◖ | 43 |
| Onimusha: Warlords | Capcom | ●●●● | 43 |
| Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny | Capcom | ●●●● | 60 |
| Onimusha 3: Demon Siege | Capcom | ●●●●◖ | 81 |
| Orphen: Scion of Sorcery | Activision | ●●● | 39 |
| Pac-Man Fever | Namco | ●● | 60 |
| Pac-Man World 2 | Namco | ●●●●◖ | 54 |
| PaRappa the Rapper 2 | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 53 |
| Paris-Dakar Rally | Acclaim | ●● | 53 |
| Phantom Brave | NIS America | ●●●●◖ | 85 |
| Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat | EA Games | ●●●◖ | 55 |
| Pitfall: The Lost Expedition | Activision | ●● | 80 |
| Pool Paradise | Ignition | ●●●◖ | 83 |
| Portal Runner | 3DO | ●● | 50 |
| Power Drome | Mud Duck | ● | 84 |
| The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage | Bam | ●● | 65 |
| Pride FC | THQ | ●●●● | 65 |
| Primal | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 68 |
| Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time | Ubisoft | ●●●●● | 75 |
| Pro Race Driver | Codemasters | ●●●●◖ | 65 |
| Project Eden | Eidos | ●●●◖ | 52 |
| Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn | TDK Mediactive | ●●◖ | 60 |
| Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy | Midway | ●●●●◖ | 82 |
| P.T.O. IV | Koei | ●●● | 66 |
| Q-Ball Billiards Master | Take-Two | ●●●◖ | 40 |
| Quake III Revolution | EA Games | ●●●●◖ | 44 |
| R: Racing Evolution | Namco | ●●●● | 76 |
| R-Type Final | Eidos/Fresh Games | ●●●● | 78 |
| Rally Fusion: Race of Champions | Activision | ●●● | 64 |
| Rapala Pro Fishing | Activision | ●●◖ | 85 |
| Ratchet & Clank | Sony CEA | ●●●●● | 63 |
| Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando | Sony CEA | ●●●●● | 75 |
| Rayman 2: Revolution | Ubisoft | ●●●●● | 41 |
| Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 67 |
| Rayman Arena | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 57 |
| RC Revenge Pro | Acclaim | ●●◖ | 41 |
| Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2 | Midway | ●●●● | 40 |
| Real Pool | Infogrames | ●●●◖ | 40 |
| Red Card Soccer 20-03 | Midway | ●●● | 57 |
| Red Dead Revolver | Rockstar | ●●●● | 82 |
| Red Faction | THQ | ●●●●● | 46 |
| Red Faction II | THQ | ●●●● | 63 |
| Reel Fishing III | Natsume | ●●●● | 72 |
| Reign of Fire | Bam | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| Resident Evil Code: Veronica X | Capcom | ●●●●◖ | 48 |
| Resident Evil: Dead Aim | Capcom | ●●●◖ | 70 |
| ⚡Resident Evil Outbreak | Capcom | ●●●◖ | 81 |
| Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Operation Resurrection | Activision | ●●●◖ | 71 |
| Rez | Sega | ●●●●◖ | 53 |
| Ribbit King | Bandai | ●●● | 82 |
| Ridge Racer V | Namco | ●●●●◖ | 38 |
| Riding Spirits | Bam | ●●●◖ | 61 |
| Ring of Red | Konami | ●●●● | 43 |
| Rise to Honor | Sony CEA | ●●● | 78 |
| ⚡Risk: Global Domination | Atari | ●●●● | 73 |
| RLH: Run Like Hell | Interplay | ●●● | 62 |
| RoadKill | Midway | ●●●● | 74 |
| Road Trip | Conspiracy | ●●●● | 61 |
| Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown | Capcom | ●●◖ | 74 |
| Rocky | Ubisoft | ●●●● | 64 |
| Robot Alchemic Drive | Enix | ●●●● | 63 |
| Robotech: Battlecry | TDK | ●●●◖ | 62 |
| Rogue Ops | Kemco | ●●◖ | 75 |
| Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII | Koei | ●●◖ | 60 |
| Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII | Koei | ●●● | 73 |
| RPG Maker 2 | Agetec | ●●●◖ | 74 |
| RTX Red Rock | LucasArts | ●● | 71 |
| Rugby | EA Sports | ●●●◖ | 48 |
| Rugby 2004 | EA Sports | ●●● | 73 |
| Rumble Racing | EA Games | ●●●●◖ | 45 |
| Rune: Viking Warlord | Take-Two | ●●◖ | 48 |
| Rygar: The Legendary Adventure | Tecmo | ●●●●◖ | 64 |
| Salt Lake 2002 | Eidos | ●●◖ | 55 |
| Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku | Sega | ●●●● | 80 |
| Samurai Warriors | Koei/EA | ●●●● | 81 |
| Saturday Night Speedway | Atari | ●●◖ | 81 |
| Savage Skies | Bam | ●●● | 56 |
| Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem | THQ | ●●● | 81 |
| Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights | THQ | ●●● | 58 |
| The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian | Universal | ●● | 62 |
| Secret Weapons Over Normandy | LucasArts | ●●●● | 75 |
| Seek and Destroy | Conspiracy | ●●●◖ | 66 |
| Sega Bass Fishing Duel | Sega | ●●● | 62 |
| Sega Soccer Slam | Sega Sports | ●● | 62 |
| Sega Sports Tennis | Sega Sports | ●●●●◖ | 60 |
| ⚡Serious Sam: Next Encounter | Global Star | ●●●◖ | 81 |
| Seven Samurai 20XX | Sammy | ●● | 80 |
| Shadow Hearts | Midway | ●●●● | 52 |
| Shadow of Destiny | Konami | ●●●◖ | 43 |
| Shadow Man: 2econd Coming | Acclaim | ●● | 57 |
| Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder | Activision | ●●◖ | 52 |
| ShellShock: Nam '67 | Eidos | ●● | 85 |
| Shifters | 3DO | ● | 58 |
| Shinobi | Sega | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| Showdown: Legends of Wrestling | Acclaim | ●◖ | 83 |
| Shox | EA Sports Big | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| Shrek 2 | Activision | ●●●◖ | 82 |
| Shrek Super Party | TDK Mediactive | ●●◖ | 64 |
| Siren | Sony CEA | ●●● | 81 |
| Silent Hill 2 | Konami | ●●●●◖ | 50 |
| Silent Hill 3 | Konami | ●●●●◖ | 71 |
| Silent Hill 4: The Room | Konami | ●●●●◖ | 85 |
| Silent Line: Armored Core | Agetec | ●●●◖ | 70 |
| Silent Scope | Konami | ●●● | 39 |
| Silent Scope 2 | Konami | ●●●◖ | 49 |
| Silent Scope 3 | Konami | ●●●◖ | 62 |
| Silpheed: The Lost Planet | Working Designs | ●●●◖ | 40 |
| The Simpsons: Hit & Run | Vivendi Universal | ●●●● | 72 |
| The Simpsons: Road Rage | EA Games | ●●● | 52 |

### ON BEHALF OF A GRATEFUL NATION

Sharp-eyed reader Brian Ruckel spotted this headstone in New Zion Cemetery in Ona, Florida, and figured it would interest *Medal of Honor* fans.

### GET YOUR SPORTS FIX ONLINE

Looking to meet up with fellow EA Sports fans? You should pay a visit to the EA Sports Fans club at easports-club.1up.com.

# DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY

## BECOME THE ULTIMATE FIGHTER

## SMOOTH MOVES

### BLAZIN' MOVES

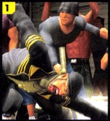
These techniques are the dopest way to smack down your opponents. Your Momentum meter increases after every successful attack or taunt—once you've gained full momentum, enter blazin' mode and grapple your foe for some sick action. Each character has a specific blazin' move, so you have to play them or beat them all to see the whole gamut of techniques.

### KNOCKBACK

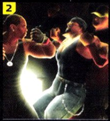
"Knockback" refers to when a fighter is attacked or pushed back. There are light and heavy knockbacks, depending on the strength of the blow. With light knockbacks, which result from certain weak attacks or weak grapples, your opponent takes a few steps backward. Heavy knockbacks may occur after strong attacks, strong grapples, or Irish whips.

With a knockback, you can easily set someone up to be grabbed by a crowd member, giving you a few moments for some free (and cheap) shots.

1



2



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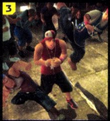


### WORK THE CROWD

Never underestimate the people standing behind you. If you step back too far, they push you back into the fight—and you're lucky if that's all they do.

**1** If you stand in front of the crowd too long, people strike you in the back. You have to contend not only with the fighter you're facing off against, but also with the people watching the match.

**2** If a fighter is knocked back into the crowd, a spectator can grab onto that fighter and hold him, giving his opponent a chance for free shots.

**3** If you grapple an opponent being held by the crowd, you perform a brutal double-team maneuver, which happens only under these conditions. Only a few moves are possible, and they depend on the intensity of the match (measured by your Momentum meter) and your position relative to the fighter being held. These double-team maneuvers also do more damage than strong grapples, so grab the chance when it appears.

### FIGHTER DOUBLE TEAMS

Another selection of double-team moves is available during team or free-for-all matches. When two characters grapple the same opponent at nearly the same time, the result is an impressive double-team technique. Like crowd double-team moves, these moves are set off by certain criteria that are specific to the action in the ring. The moves are just as devastating as crowd double-team moves and possibly even more entertaining.

## CARRY A LARGE STICK

### USING WEAPONS

Weapons pop up throughout the game, sometimes in the hands of enthusiastic crowd members eager to see a winner and sometimes spontaneously in the fighting environment.

Weapons can have a dramatic effect on the game. A dominant fighter can be thrown off his game entirely by being brained a few times with a crowbar. As you'll see, weapons have interesting dynamics.

### VENUE SPECIFIC

Weapons are generally found in appropriate venues. You won't find a muffler in a nightclub, and you won't find a pool cue where there isn't a pool table. Expect to see weapons that are consistent with the venue you're fighting in.

### LIMITED USE

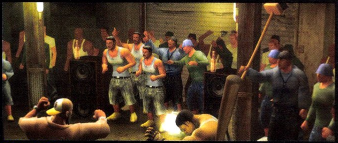
All weapons have hit points that determine how many times they can be used before they break in half, get bent, or are otherwise rendered useless. A bottle breaks after one successful hit, for example, while a steel pipe can be used three or four times before it bends and drops to the ground.

### WEAPON DAMAGE

Weapons can be used for different types of strikes, including weak, strong, running, or diving attacks. How much damage a weapon can do is determined by the strike type, the basic amount of damage it does, and the type of weapon used.

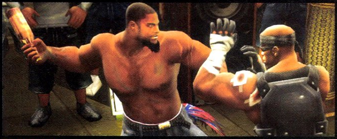
For example, a weak strike with a sledgehammer may do five points of damage, but a diving attack off the top rope with the same weapon may do 20. Similarly, a weak attack with a bottle does less damage than a weak attack with a shovel.

Fresh weapons do more damage. As a weapon is used, it becomes less effective and its damage modifier goes down. A bat may do 20 points of damage on the first hit, 15 on the second, 10 on the third, and so forth until it breaks and is rendered useless. If several weapons are available, always choose the new one.



### PERIODICITY

Weapons don't just appear out of thin air. They either show up in the hands of a crowd member or pop out of certain environmental objects. Weapons initially show up in the crowd about every 30 seconds. As the battle wears on and blood gets spilled, weapons pop up more frequently. Eventually, as the crowd gets restless for a decisive victory, weapons appear about every 10 seconds. The usual maximum is four weapons in the ring at a time.

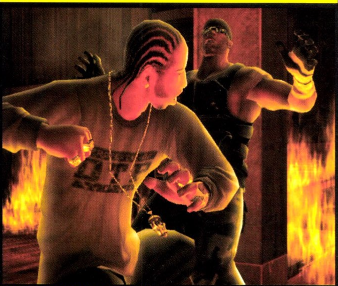


### BLOCKING

Don't get paranoid when your opponent grabs a steel bar. Weapons can be defended against unless you're stunned. When someone comes at you with a weapon, either avoid his swings entirely or properly time a counter-attack, which takes the weapon away from him and gives you the opportunity to brain him with it.

Another tactic is to duck in and out of the weapon's range. It takes practice and great timing, but you can grapple a weapon-wielding opponent. After you grab him, he drops the weapon and it becomes available to whomever grabs it next.

## OFF THE WALL



### ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

There are various objects in each environment that you can bounce your opponent off of (or be bounced off of yourself). Each inflicts damage, with the amount depending on the technique used.

For example, a stunned opponent thrown into a wall may receive 5 percent damage. But when a strong grapple is used to throw the same opponent into a steel post, damage may increase to 15 percent. Become familiar with your environment so you can use its features to your advantage. If you don't, your opponent certainly will.

### STICKY-POINT GRAPPLES

Through experience, you will find all the prime areas to throw your opponent in each ring—and there is an extremely satisfying humiliation factor involved in throwing your buddy into a soda machine.

With sticky-point grapples, you push or throw your opponent into an object to stun him after grappling him. While your opponent is stunned, grapple him again for a crushing move into or near the same object.

You must execute these moves during that short period of time when your opponent is stunned, or he'll recover. Move in quickly after pushing or whipping someone into a wall, so you can finish him off.

Another special grapple, the hot-spot grapple, is similar to the sticky-point grapple but can be executed only under the right circumstances. When you are holding an opponent in a grapple and your back is to an object (such as a wooden pillar or bar table), press toward the object and grapple. Normally, this would throw the opponent into the object, but within a certain range, you will perform a hot-spot grapple. This move can be used to interact with weapons (bottles and pool cues) as you grapple, potentially setting up big moments in the fight.

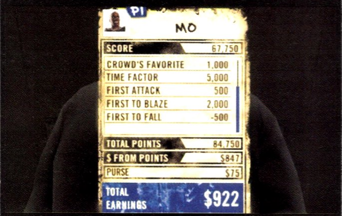
### ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

You'll find an additional dynamic to pummeling your opponents in certain special venues in story mode or certain match types in battle mode. Environmental hazards come in various forms, but they all have the same effect against a foe who is unaware of how much trouble he's in.

## CASHING IT IN

### POINT SCORING

Points are awarded for techniques and accomplishments as you progress through fights. Certain physical techniques, such as striking, kicking, grappling, and running attacks, earn you a set number of points. Some accomplishments within a fight, including being the first to blaze or use weapons, are also worth points. A huge time bonus rides on how fast you can win.



P1

MO

| | |
|---|---|
| SCORE | 67,750 |
| CROWD'S FAVORITE | 1,000 |
| TIME FACTOR | 5,000 |
| FIRST ATTACK | 500 |
| FIRST TO BLAZE | 2,000 |
| FIRST TO FALL | -500 |
| TOTAL POINTS | 84,750 |
| $ FROM POINTS | $847 |
| PURSE | $75 |
| TOTAL EARNINGS | $922 |

**TIP:** Maximize your score through diversity. Try to get as many techniques into each match as possible. Pull off your cool, flashy moves, especially your blazin' moves, top-rope attacks, and running attacks. The more you do, the more bonuses you get. All your points add up to cash, which you can then spend in the shops.

### DEVELOPMENT POINTS

These earned points allow your player to advance his skills. How you spend your points on upgrading your character and learning new skills is up to you, but choose wisely since you can't max out all your fighter's attributes.

You can max out attribute bars in the gym, but it's important to remember that these bars indicate only 67 percent of a character's overall attribute rating (even though the bar says 100 percent). The remaining 33 percent is determined by skill bonuses, which are achieved by learning new styles and reaching certain milestones in the game.

### NO MAX

Created players can never reach 100 percent of their statistical maximums. The developers built a special system for created-player development into the game that controls which skills can be maximized while others are held steady. It all depends on the choices you make for your fighter. Certain combinations of fighting styles and the completion of some in-game milestones push character strengths in particular directions. There is no way to maximize all of a created player's attributes because each created player is likely to have different combinations of attribute maximums depending on the choices that were made during his development. «

**CAUTION!**

Some characters you have already beaten show up again later in the story. And beware: They have gotten tougher since you were last pitted against them. You're not the only one who has been training!

**IT'S HOW YOU PLAY**

The development points and cash earned for each fight in story mode are scaled according to difficulty level. If you fight at Medium difficulty, you get the normal amount. If the difficulty level is set to Hard, you get a 50 percent bonus; at Easy, you get a 25 percent penalty. To maximize your fighter's development potential, play story mode on the Hard difficulty level.

# THE SPORTS GUY

## THE FEVER PITCH OF PENNANT FEVER

**TODD ZUNIGA,** is a former *OPM* staffer turned freelance writer. If you have a question about sports games, want a prediction, or just disagree, send it here: thesportsguy@ziffdavis.com.

**It's MLB playoff time,** the greatest month of the calendar year by my standards. Arguable, for sure (March Madness, anyone?), but after last year's monster showing in terms of both ratings and quality, it's tough to turn your back on a sport with no clock, where everything comes down to this bases loaded, bottom of the ninth, 3-2 pitch: Here it comes and...fouled away. What other sport pulls heartstrings like baseball's equivalent to the do-over: the two-strike foul ball?

With all the warm, fuzzy baseball love in the air, it's prediction time! Actually, not true. Because of *MVP Baseball 2004* (aka Biff Tannen's *Gray's Sports Almanac* from *Back to the Future Part II*), these are more reality than prediction, thus: SPOILER ALERT! After 20 hours of various simulating, here are your 2004 MLB playoff contestants and the winner of each division series:

**NL:** Cubs vs. Braves (Cubs in four)
Dodgers vs. Cardinals (Dodgers in four)
**AL:** Twins vs. Red Sox (Sox in five)
Yankees vs. Angels (Angels in five)

On to the LCS...

**NL:** Cubs vs. Dodgers
(Cubs in seven)—Bartman is free!
**AL:** Angels vs. Red Sox (Sox in seven)

And in the World Series...

Hell, in fact, freezes over, just as *Sports Illustrated* predicted on its MLB preseason cover. That's right, in six games the Cubs win the World Series!

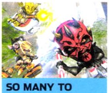
Gobbledygook, you say! Hogwash, gibberish, claptrap! Deception, deceit, dishonesty! After all, the Angels can't lose to the BoSox—they didn't even make the playoffs! And the beloved Cubbies lost out to the Giants for the wild card in a one-game playoff! From where I'm standing (actually, I'm sitting) and with editorial timing being what it is, these things haven't happened yet, but they will have by the time you are reading this. Thus, it can and will happen. Ignore reality and listen to me (especially if I'm right). Be excited—courtesy of videogames, the Cubs' curse of the billy goat is at long last over!

## HELL, IN FACT, FREEZES OVER AS THE CUBS WIN THE WORLD SERIES.

Now, moving on from America's former pastime to its current one, I have done my best Jeremy Brett impersonation (he played Sherlock Holmes, you boob!) and uncovered the statistical equivalent of winning four straight Super Bowls in the salary cap era. At first glance, *Madden NFL 2005* outsold *ESPN NFL 2K5* by only 300,000 copies (1.3 million to 1 million). Not a huge margin, considering past defeats. But look deeper and you'll see the *Madden* dynasty's power. First show of domination: *Madden* sold 1.3 million units in a third of the time it took *ESPN* to sell a million. Second show of severe domination: the financial tally is uglified. *Madden* netted around $64 million, while *ESPN* pulled in only $19 million. *ESPN*'s valiant attempt to cut into *Madden*'s market share succeeded, but was this a good strategy? If consumers buy both games, *Madden* wins. I love the underdog, but I bought both games (what's $20?). Didn't you?

In the words of the immortal Mr. T, enough jibber-jabber. It's time for October's Can't Miss Contests: Football gamblers, get gamblin' on these *Madden*-picked must-sees...Tampa at St. Louis: Bucs'll crush the Rams 24-14 on October 18's *MNF*; Ravens at Eagles: The Ravens trick the treating Eagles 20-18 on Halloween. And for Fox Sports World watchers, check out Manchester United versus Arsenal on October 24, along with the match I'll be attending with my favorite Russian billionaire, Chelsea versus Liverpool October 3. Chelsea! Chelsea! Chelski! «

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Simpsons Skateboarding | EA Games | ●◖ | 64 |
| The Sims | EA Games | ●●●● | 65 |
| ⚡The Sims: Bustin' Out | EA Games | ●●●●◖ | 76 |
| Sky Gunner | Atlus | ●●●◖ | 58 |
| Sky Odyssey | Activision | ●●● | 40 |
| Sled Storm | EA Sports Big | ●●●◖ | 55 |
| **Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **62** |
| Smash Cars | Metro3D | ●●●◖ | 71 |
| Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament | Namco | ●●●◖ | 56 |
| Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament 2 | Namco | ●●●● | 82 |
| **Smuggler's Run** | **Rockstar** | ●●●●◖ | **39** |
| Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory | Rockstar | ●●●●◖ | 52 |
| Soccer America: International Cup | Hot-B | ●● | 48 |
| Soccer Mania | EA/Lego | ●●●◖ | 59 |
| **⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **60** |
| **⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs** | **Sony CEA** | ●●●●● | **75** |
| Soldier of Fortune | Majesco | ●●● | 52 |
| Sonic Heroes | Sega | ●● | 77 |
| **Soul Calibur II** | **Namco** | ●●●●● | **72** |
| Soul Reaver 2 | Eidos | ●●● | 52 |
| Space Channel 5 Special Edition | Sega | ●●●◖ | 75 |
| Space Race | Infogrames | ●●◖ | 59 |
| Spawn Armageddon | Namco | ●◖ | 76 |
| Speed Kings | Acclaim | ●●●● | 70 |
| Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy | THQ | ●●●◖ | 75 |
| **Spider-Man** | **Activision** | ●●●●◖ | **57** |
| Spider-Man 2 | Activision | ●●●◖ | 84 |
| Splashdown | Infogrames | ●●●● | 52 |
| **Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild** | **THQ** | ●●●●● | **72** |
| SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom | THQ | ●●●●◖ | 75 |
| Spy Fiction | Sammy | ●● | 85 |
| **SpyHunter** | **Midway** | ●●●●◖ | **50** |
| SpyHunter 2 | Midway | ●●● | 76 |
| Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly | Vivendi Universal | ●●● | 64 |
| ⚡SRS: Street Racing Syndicate | Namco | ●●● | 64 |
| **SSX** | **EA Sports Big** | ●●●●● | **38** |
| **SSX Tricky** | **EA Sports Big** | ●●●●● | **52** |
| **⚡SSX 3** | **EA Sports Big** | ●●●●● | **74** |
| Star Ocean: Till the End of Time | Square Enix | ●●●● | 84 |
| Star Trek: Shattered Universe | TDK | ●● | 75 |
| Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force | Majesco | ●●◖ | 53 |
| Star Wars Bounty Hunter | LucasArts | ●●● | 64 |
| Star Wars: The Clone Wars | LucasArts | ●●● | 65 |
| » Star Wars Super Bombad Racing | LucasArts | ●● | 45 |
| Star Wars Jedi Starfighter | LucasArts | ●●●◖ | 56 |
| Star Wars Racer Revenge | LucasArts | ●●●●◖ | 55 |
| **Star Wars Starfighter** | **LucasArts** | ●●●●◖ | **43** |
| Starsky & Hutch | Gotham Games | ●● | 74 |
| **State of Emergency** | **Rockstar** | ●●● | **55** |
| Stitch: Experiment 626 | Sony CEA | ●●◖ | 59 |
| Street Fighter Anniversary Collection | Capcom | ●●●● | 84 |
| Street Fighter EX 3 | Capcom | ●●●◖ | 39 |
| Street Hoops | Activision | ●●●◖ | 60 |
| Stretch Panic | Conspiracy | ●●●◖ | 47 |
| Strike Force Bowling | Crave | ●◖ | 82 |
| Stuntman | Infogrames/Atari | ●●● | 59 |
| Sub Rebellion | Metro 3D | ●●●● | 62 |
| The Suffering | Midway | ●●● | 80 |
| Suikoden III | Konami | ●●● | 63 |
| Summer Heat Beach Volleyball | Acclaim | ●●●◖ | 72 |
| Summoner | THQ | ●●● | 39 |
| Summoner 2 | THQ | ●●●◖ | 62 |
| Sunny Garcia Surfing | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 51 |
| Super Bust-A-Move | Acclaim | ●●● | 41 |
| Super Bust-A-Move 2 | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| Super Trucks Racing | XS Games | ●◖ | 76 |
| Supercar Street Challenge | Activision | ●●◖ | 52 |
| Superman: Shadow of Apokolips | Atari | ●●●◖ | 63 |
| Surfing H3O | Rockstar | ●● | 40 |
| SWAT: Global Strike Team | Sierra | ●●● | 74 |
| Swing Away Golf | EA Games | ●●● | 38 |
| ⚡Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain | Sony CEA | ●●● | 81 |



### SO MANY TO CHOOSE FROM

What's the worst *Star Wars* game ever made? For our money, it's got to be *Super Bombad Racing*. Does it get any worse than a big-headed Jar-Jar?

Every good deed deserves a medal. Unfortunately, you are going to have to bust your hump to accomplish these little trinkets. Check out the requirements for unlocking the medals in the latest incarnation of *Syphon Filter*.

### THE CHARM OFFENSIVE

You haven't become a true American hero in Logan's eyes until you've scoured the combat zone for tiny pieces of shiny metal. For a full metal jacket, execute your missions with vim and vigor:

**MEDALS AND AWARDS**

**Agency Medal of Valor**

Get all Agency ratings, Special Agency ratings, all commendations, all other medals, and the highest rank.

**Alima Karkadann's Unicorn Charm**

Complete all objectives in the Yemen 1 and 2 missions. In the Ukraine mission, get Alima Haddad to safety.

**Carthage Exemplary Service Tribute Medal**

In the Carthage 1 and 2 missions, protect the CHA officers. In the Carthage 2 mission, eliminate all four ALA death-squad assassins. In the Carthage 3 mission, rescue the injured SWAT officers.

**Ellison Warner Award**

In the Belarus 2 mission, destroy the SCUD missile. In the Yemen 2 mission, destroy the SCUD firing mechanism. In the Myanmar mission, recover the flight recorder.

**Great Lakes Service Medal**

Complete all objectives in the Carthage 1, 2, and 3 missions. In the Yemen 1 mission, photograph Fadhil's files. In the Zurich mission, obtain ALA financial records.

**Homeland Security Citation**

Get the Carthage Exemplary Service Tribute Medal and the President's Official Liberty Award. In the Zurich mission, obtain the Birchim files.

**Kinishi Kuncho: Order of the Golden Dragon Medal**

Get the Republic of Korea Service Award. Complete all objectives in the Kyrgyzstan, Tokyo, and Myanmar missions.

**Medal of Distinction**

Complete the single-player mission deadlines in all missions.

**Mossad Friend to Peace Medal**

Get the Karkadann and Alima's Unicorn Charm. In the Kyrgyzstan mission, eliminate Zayed Al Dhahiri.

**President's Official Liberty Award**

In the Carthage 3 mission, complete the DPE order on Masson. In the Italy mission, assassinate Dimitri by the bell tower at 3:00 p.m. In the Belarus 1 mission, eliminate Zhidkov. In the Kyrgyzstan mission, poison Saydahmat's water chalice. In the Myanmar mission, eliminate Than Muang.

**Republic of Korea Service Award**

In the Kyrgyzstan mission, find Yuschenko's papers. In the Yemen 1 mission, obtain Thae-bok Jon's credentials. In the Tokyo mission, upload the computer data. In the Myanmar mission, find Yong-jun Kim's briefcase.

**South African Freedom Medal**

Do not have any collateral damage in any mission. Get Stone's Medal of Courage and the Carthage Exemplary Service Tribute. In the Belarus 1 mission, get all workers to safety. In the Lorelei mission, rescue the level 5 salvage personnel.

**Stone's Medal of Courage**

Rescue Stone Ukraine and provide cover fire for Stone.

**The Golden Cross of Russia Medal**

Complete all objectives in the Belarus 1, 2, Kyrgyzstan, Minsk, and Ukraine missions. In the Yemen 1 mission, photograph Fadhil's files. In the Montenegro mission, find evidence linking Niculescu to Syphon Filter.

**United Nations Peace Award**

Cure the Omega Strain. In the Carthage 1 mission, scan the tissue sample. In the Carthage 2 mission, obtain Mujari's recorder. In the Belarus 1 mission, take the tissue sample from the cow carcass and the mill documents from the safe. In the Belarus 2 mission, obtain the sewage sample. In the Yemen 2 mission, obtain Yushchenko's viral container. In the Minsk mission, acquire the Omega Strain serum. In the Lorelei mission, collect the original virus sample. In the Tokyo mission, obtain the sample. In the Ukraine mission, find the Omega Strain DNA code.

| GAME | PUBLISHER | SCORE | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tak and the Power of Juju | THQ | ●●●◖ | 75 |
| Tarzan: Untamed | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 52 |
| Taz: Wanted | Infogrames | ●●●◖ | 60 |
| Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles | Konami | ●●◖ | 75 |
| Tekken 4 | Namco | ●●●◖ | 61 |
| **Tekken Tag Tournament** | **Namco** | **●●●●◖** | **39** |
| Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven | Activision | ●●● | 67 |
| The Terminator: Dawn of Fate | Atari | ●●◖ | 63 |
| Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines | Atari | ●◖ | 77 |
| **Test Drive** | **Infogrames** | **●●●◖** | **58** |
| Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open | Infogrames | ●●● | 48 |
| Test Drive: Eve of Destruction | Atari | ●●●● | 85 |
| Tetris Worlds | THQ | ●● | 57 |
| Theme Park Roller Coaster | EA Games | ●●●● | 41 |
| The Thing | Universal | ●●● | 62 |
| Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix | Eidos | ●◖ | 52 |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001 | EA Sports | ●●● | 44 |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002 | EA Sports | ●●●● | 55 |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 63 |
| **⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004** | **EA Sports** | **●●●●●** | **73** |
| Time Crisis 2 | Namco | ●●●● | 49 |
| Time Crisis 3 | Namco | ●●●●◖ | 74 |
| **TimeSplitters** | **Eidos** | **●●●●●** | **39** |
| **TimeSplitters 2** | **Eidos** | **●●●●●** | **63** |
| Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3 | Crave | ●● | 76 |
| Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero | Crave | ●●◖ | 45 |
| Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 65 |
| ⚡Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 78 |
| ⚡Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 | Ubisoft | ●●●● | 80 |
| Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell | Ubisoft | ●●●●◖ | 68 |
| **⚡Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow** | **Ubisoft** | **●●●●●** | **82** |
| Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness | Eidos | ●● | 72 |
| **⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3** | **Activision** | **●●●●●** | **51** |
| **⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4** | **Activision** | **●●●●●** | **63** |
| **⚡Tony Hawk's Underground** | **Activision** | **●●●●●** | **76** |
| Top Angler | Xicat | ●●●◖ | 57 |
| Top Gear Dare Devil | Kemco | ●●●◖ | 41 |
| Top Gun: Combat Zones | Titus | ●●● | 50 |
| Total Immersion Racing | Empire | ● | 66 |
| Transformers | Atari | ●●●◖ | 81 |
| Transworld Surf | Infogrames | ●●●◖ | 57 |
| ⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault | Sierra | ●●●◖ | 62 |
| Triple Play 2002 | EA Sports | ●● | 55 |
| Triple Play Baseball | EA Sports | ●● | 45 |
| ⚡Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged | Atari | ●● | 81 |
| True Crime: Streets of L.A. | Activision | ●● | 76 |
| Tsugunai: Atonement | Atlus | ●●● | 53 |
| Turok: Evolution | Acclaim | ●◖ | 62 |
| **Twisted Metal: Black** | **Sony CEA** | **●●●●●** | **47** |
| ⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 61 |
| Ty the Tasmanian Tiger | EA Games | ●●● | 62 |
| UEFA Euro 2004 | EA Sports | ●●●●◖ | 82 |
| UFC Throwdown | Crave | ●●●◖ | 58 |
| UFC Sudden Impact | Crave | ●●●◖ | 82 |
| Unison | Tecmo | ●●●◖ | 44 |
| Unlimited Saga | Square Enix | ●● | 70 |
| Unreal Tournament | Infogrames | ●●◖ | 40 |
| V-Rally 3 | Infogrames | ●●●●◖ | 64 |
| Vampire Night | Namco | ●●◖ | 52 |
| Van Helsing | Vivendi Universal | ●●●◖ | 82 |
| Vexx | Acclaim | ●● | 67 |
| Victorious Boxers | Empire | ●●●◖ | 51 |
| Viewtiful Joe | Capcom | ●●●●◖ | 85 |
| **Virtua Fighter 4** | **Sega** | **●●●●●** | **55** |
| **Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution** | **Sega** | **●●●●●** | **72** |
| Virtual on Marz | Sega | ●● | 76 |
| Wakeboarding Unleashed | Activision | ●●●●◖ | 70 |
| Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo | Bam | ●●● | 74 |
| War Jetz | 3DO | ●●◖ | 48 |
| **War of the Monsters** | **Sony CEA** | **●●●●●** | **64** |
| ⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior | THQ | ●●◖ | 74 |
| Warriors of Might & Magic | 3DO | ●●◖ | 44 |
| Wave Rally | Eidos | ●◖ | 53 |
| Way of the Samurai | Bam | ●●●◖ | 59 |
| Way of the Samurai 2 | Capcom | ●●● | 82 |
| Wheel of Fortune | Atari | ●●◖ | 76 |
| Whiplash | Eidos | ●●●◖ | 76 |
| Whirl Tour | Vivendi Universal | ●● | 63 |
| Whiteout | Konami | ● | 65 |
| Wild Arms 3 | Sony CEA | ●●●◖ | 62 |
| Wild Wild Racing | Interplay | ●●● | 39 |
| Winback | Koei | ●●●● | 43 |
| Wipeout Fusion | Bam | ●●●●◖ | 57 |
| Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land | Atlus | ●●● | 53 |
| Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park | DreamCatcher | ●●● | 57 |
| ⚡World Championship Pool 2004 | Jaleco | ●●●◖ | 76 |
| World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks | 3DO | ●●● | 42 |
| World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars | Infogrames | ●●●● | 55 |
| World Series Baseball 2K3 | Sega Sports | ●●●● | 67 |
| **World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l** | **Konami** | **●●●●●** | **67** |
| **World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l** | **Konami** | **●●●●●** | **78** |
| World Tour Soccer 2002 | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 53 |
| World Tour Soccer 2003 | Sony CEA | ●●●● | 65 |
| ⚡World Tour Soccer 2004 | Sony CEA | ●●● | 80 |
| Wrath Unleashed | LucasArts | ●◖ | 78 |
| **WRC: World Rally Championship** | **Bam** | **●●●●●** | **57** |
| Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions | Activision | ●● | 63 |
| WTA Tour Tennis | Konami | ● | 57 |
| WWE Crush Hour | THQ | ●●◖ | 68 |
| WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain | THQ | ●●●◖ | 76 |
| WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth | THQ | ●●◖ | 64 |
| **WWE SmackDown! Just Bring It** | **THQ** | **●●●◖** | **52** |
| X Squad | EA Games | ●●●◖ | 38 |
| The X-Files: Resist or Serve | Vivendi Universal | ●●◖ | 81 |
| X-Men: Next Dimension | Activision | ●●● | 64 |
| X2: Wolverine's Revenge | Activision | ●●● | 69 |
| Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht | Namco | ●●●● | 66 |
| XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association | Acclaim | ●●●●◖ | 74 |
| ⚡XIII | Ubisoft | ●●●◖ | 75 |
| Yanya Caballista: City Skater | Koei | ●●●◖ | 49 |
| Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses | Konami | ●●◖ | 67 |
| Zapper | Infogrames | ●●◖ | 64 |
| Z.O.E.: Zone of the Enders | Konami | ●●●●◖ | 44 |
| Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner | Konami | ●●●●◖ | 68 |

# READER REVIEWS

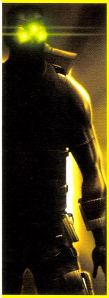
## HARNESS THE POWER OF YOUR MIND

### SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

**What you said:** "When I purchased this game, I didn't have a Network Adaptor, but I decided to play through the single-player mode anyway. Trust me, you won't find a better spy game EVER. This game isn't easy. You're gonna curse a lot and you're gonna get frustrated, but it's worth it. Once you're knocking out terrorists in the jungles, you'll regret cursing and throwing your controller across the room. When that first beautiful jungle level began, the first thing I noticed was the fish swimming in the water. To me, that was cool. Isn't it the little details that make games great?

"After getting through the single-player game, I realized that I MUST play online, so I got a Network Adaptor. Man, there is no better online multiplayer game. Being a spy hiding in the dark can make your teeth chatter and your blood run cold.

**"THERE IS NO BETTER MULTIPLAYER GAME."**



And did I mention all the sweet weapons? My favorite merc weapon is the Taser. And spies have the unique ability to snap necks. Both offline and online, this game is fantastic."

**Your score: ●●●●●**

—Steve Burns

**What we said:** "It gets under your skin to the point that you start thinking about things in real life in game terms."

**Our score: ●●●●●**

### PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

**What you said:** "Talk about a double-edged sword. On one hand, this game is amazing. The physics are great, and the wide variety of special powers means that you can always play the game in many different ways. This game does a lot of innovative things, and it's a nice take on the third-person action genre.

"Then you get the other side of the sword: the flaws. And this game has many. For me, it isn't so much the story, it's the level design. Maybe I'm not as smart as other gamers, but I get stuck one too many times playing *Psi-Ops*. And don't get me started on the boring 'find the key card' missions that I am forced to endure during the story mode. It's too hunt-and-fetch.

"Still, the game can be fun once you know what you're doing. Just be sure to buy the strategy guide if you plop down $50."

**Your score: ●●●◖**

—Derek Neumeier

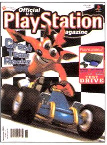
**What we said:** "It's a testament to the excellence of the fundamental gameplay that it was still fun despite the major issues of plot and writing."

**Our score: ●●●●◖**

# REWIND

## FIVE YEARS AGO IN OPM

**Things were changing** in November of 1999. The PS2 had been unveiled, PS1 games were getting more and more interesting, and many of the long-running franchises we still enjoy today were starting to be seen.



### TWO IS THE LOVELIEST NUMBER

The biggest news in November wasn't about software, though. It was all about hardware, baby: The PlayStation 2 had been unveiled at a special event in Tokyo, and our hearts were all aflutter at the possibilities. We dealt out screens of some of the most interesting games announced at the event, such as *Tekken Tag Tournament*, *Dark Cloud*, and, er, *Popolocrois Story 3*. Our favorite line was a quote by Sony R&D chief Phil Harrison regarding the Dreamcast: "I think being half our price represents the fact that they are less than half of our technology." Mee-yow!

### AND BY "LAST," YOU MEAN...?

Oh, if only *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* had stayed true to its word. Our feature on Lara's latest exploits showed graphics we described as "stunning," and to be fair to ourselves, they really were impressive for the time. Too bad the game was such crap.

### CRASHTASTIC

Naughty Dog had just pushed *Crash Bandicoot* out of the nest, wrapping up *Crash Team Racing*, the last Naughty Dog–developed *Crash* game ever. We talked to Jason Rubin, the head of Naughty Dog, about his future plans, and he dropped some hints when talking about the power of the PS2: "If it turns out that a really cool character has metallic, shiny armor, that could be a possibility. If we want huge amounts of flowing hair, we can do that." Sounds like Jak to us.

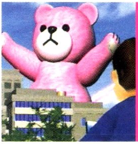
Two-rific!

### REVIEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Speaking of *Crash*, the big review in November was *Crash Team Racing*, which earned a well-deserved five discs for being one of the best cart racers ever. We also reviewed the very first *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*; it got four-and-a-half discs.

### DEMO MADNESS

The biggest name on the disc in November 1999 was the long-awaited (and oft-delayed) *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver*, in which we got to play one of the intricate puzzles that made the series famous. Also included on the disc: *Grandia*, *NFL Blitz 2000*, and, um, *40 Winks*? Let's move on. «



**CAPTION CONTEST WINNER**

"By far the coolest of the Guardian Forces in *Final Fantasy VIII*."
—Ethan Fahy,
e_fahy@yahoo.com

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# ON THE DVD

## TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

**This month, we decided** to dial it up to 11—as in 11 playable demos, right here on the very disc that's bound into the very magazine you are holding in your very hands at this very second. So what are you waiting for? Put this down now and start playing.

PlayStation
Issue 86
Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
PLAY IT!
METAL GEAR SOLID 3
SNAKE EATER
BONUS!
KILLZONE AT E3
PLUS! EVEN MORE GT4
TRACK
GRAN TURISMO 4
PLAY IT!
AREA 51
PLAY IT!
SILENT HILL 4 THE ROOM
PLUS! NEO CONTRA • ROBOTECH: INVASION • TAK 2: THE STAFF OF DREAMS • NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2 • AND MUCH MORE
Disc 86 presented by Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine and PlayStation Underground
PlayStation
DVD

## [PLAY IT!]

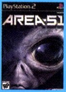
**BUT WAIT—THERE'S MORE!**
The hits just keep on coming! Also available for you to play on the disc this month are *Robotech: Invasion, Fight Club, Crash Twinsanity, Tak 2,* and *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex.*

### METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Where's the only place you can get the playable demo of *MGS3*? That's right—right here in this magazine. For more details on the sweetness, go to page 96.

### RATCHET & CLANK: UP YOUR ARSENAL

For some platforming goodness, load up this huge demo, which lets you check out one of the levels *and* play through a side-scrolling game-within-the-game.



### AREA 51

Is there anything better than shooting the crap out of something? How about shooting the crap out of terrorist-loving, America-hating aliens? Yeah, we thought you'd like that.

### NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

How'd you like to check out 15 percent of the entire game of *Need for Speed Underground 2?* Well, your wish is granted—just pop this disc into your PS2.

### SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

"Some parts of this game may be considered violent or cruel." That's the warning at the beginning of the demo for *Silent Hill 4.* Consider yourself warned.

### NEO CONTRA

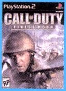
There are helicopters. There are dinosaurs. There is a lot of shooting the heck out of stuff. If that doesn't make a perfect trilogy of gaming goodness, then we don't know what does.

## [WATCH IT!]

**PLUS...**
Have problems getting 100 percent in *SpongeBob SquarePants: The Battle for Bikini Bottom*? Here's your chance to download the complete game.

### MONSTER HUNTER

Attention, barbecue aficionados: There's finally a game that allows you to utilize your mastery of meat roasting, *and* you get to hunt dinosaurs. Watch the video, then read our review on page 134.

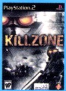


### CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

There is no rest for the wicked—or in this game, for the good guys either. Take a look behind the scenes of the nonstop war action of *Call of Duty.*

### EYETOY: ANTIGRAV

We all love to see people making fools of themselves, which explains the reality television boom. Here's yet another opportunity for mocking—watch some people playing *Antigrav.*



### KILLZONE

Those of you who saw our May cover story of *Killzone* already know that it looks cool; for those of you who missed it, check out some gameplay footage and interviews with the team.

### ATV OFFROAD FURY 3

If you like all-terrain vehicles, if you like riding them off-road, if you like the furiousness, well...then this is a game that you'll probably like.

### GRAN TURISMO 4

Yeah, it looks like film footage of a car race, but that's all gameplay video. Join us in our continuing coverage of the countdown to PlayStation 2's quintessential racing simulation.

### PLAYSTATION UNDERGROUND TEAM

**Demo Disc Producers**
Gary Barth, Manuel Sousa, Jerome Strach, Chris Tan
**Marketing Team**
Steve Williams, Jesse Caid
**Executive Producer**
Andrew House
**Format Q&A**
Sam Bradley, DeMarlo King
**Account Coordinator**
Eric Ippolito

**Programming and interface artwork by**
**Lifelike Productions, Inc.**
**Lead Programmers**
William Bohan, Ron Midthun, Avery Lodato
**3D Artists** Jason Robinson, Philip Williamson, David Hayes
**Producer** Jessi Harrison
**President** Katherine Williams
**Technical Director** Tim Edwards
SPECIAL THANKS
Maimoona Block, Kirsten Costello, Tom Gillan, Michelle Manahan, Gerald Martin, Jim Williams

### DISC PROBLEMS?

Did you buy a copy of our magazine that did not contain a demo CD? Simply send the receipt in an envelope marked "*OPM* Replacement Disc" to the address below with the name and address of the store plus your phone number and address and we'll send you the disc. Make sure you specify which month the corresponding disc belongs to in order to ensure you get the right one.

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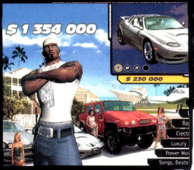

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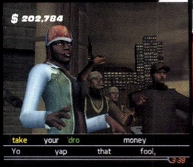

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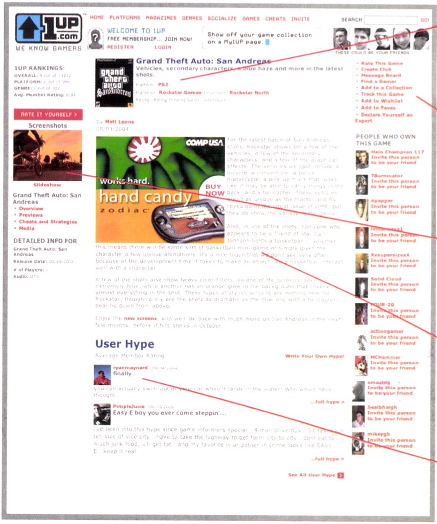

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Slideshow

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas
- Overview
- Previews
- Cheats and Strategies
- Media

DETAILED INFO FOR
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas
Release Date: 10/19/2004
# of Players: 1
Audio: DTS

**Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas**
Vehicles, secondary characters, a blue haze and more in the latest shots.
Platform: PS2
Publisher: Rockstar Games Developer: Rockstar North
Rating: Rating Pending Genre: Adventure

by Matt Leone
08/03/2004

For the latest batch of San Andreas shots, Rockstar shows off a few of the vehicles, a few of the secondary characters, and a few of the graphical effects. The vehicles we spot include a bicycle, a convertible, a police motorcycle, a pick-up truck that looks like it may be able to carry things in the back, and a helicopter. These vehicles aren't as unique as the tractor and RV revealed in the latest issue of GMR, but they do show the variety in the game.

Also, in one of the shots, someone who appears to be a friend of star Carl Johnson holds a basketball -- whether this means there will be some sort of basketball mini-game or simply gives the character a few unique animations, it's a nice touch that we don't see very often because of the development time it takes to make an object like a basketball interact well with a character.

A few of the shots also show heavy color filters, so one of the screens looks extremely blue, while another has an orange glow in the background that covers almost everything in the shot. These types of stylish screens are nothing new for Rockstar, though rarely are the shots as dramatic as the blue one with a helicopter bearing down from above.

Enjoy the **new screens**, and we'll be back with much more on San Andreas in the next few months, before it hits stores in October.

### User Hype

Average Member Rating

Write Your Own Hype!

**ryanmaynard** 08/04/2004
finally
you can actually swim out of your car when it lands in the water! Who would have thought....
...full hype >

**PimpleJuice** 08/03/2004
Easy E boy you ever come steppin'...
i've been into this hype since game informers special... 4 man drive bys... 3 citys each ten size of vice city...have to take the highway to get form city to city...dont eat to much junk food, u'll get fat...and my favorite is ur patner in crime looks like EASY E...keep it real
...full hype >

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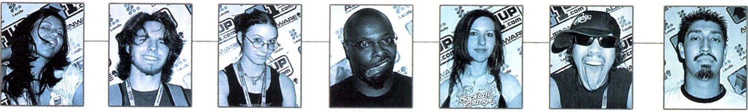

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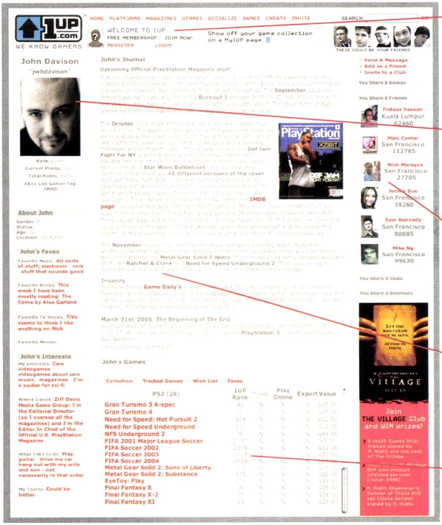

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John Davison
"jwhdavison"

Rank:
Current Points:
Total Points:
XBox Live Gamer Tag: JWHD

About John
Gender:
Status:
Age:
Location:

John's Faves
Favorite Music: All sorts of stuff; electronic rock stuff that sounds good
Favorite Books: This week I have been mostly reading: The Coma by Alex Garland
Favorite TV Shows: TiVo seems to think I like anything on Nick
Favorite Movies:

John's Interests
My Interests: Cars videogames videogames about cars music magazines I'm a sucker for sci-fi
Where I work: Ziff Davis Media Game Group: I'm the Editorial Director (so I oversee all the magazines) and I'm the Editor In Chief of the Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
What I like to do: Play guitar drive my car hang out with my wife and son - not necessarily in that order
My Tastes: Could be better

John's Journal

Upcoming Official PlayStation Magazine stuff

Insanity

March 31st, 2005. The Beginning of The End

John's Games

Collection Tracked Games Wish List Faves

| PS2 (28) | 1UP Rank | Trade | Play Online | Expert | Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gran Turismo 3 A-spec | 40 | N | N | N | $29.00 |
| Gran Turismo 4 | [illegible] | N | N | N | $45.00 |
| Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 | 424 | N | N | N | $32.00 |
| Need for Speed Underground | [illegible] | N | N | N | $32.00 |
| NFS Underground 2 | 9 | N | N | N | $49.95 |
| FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer | [illegible] | N | N | N | [illegible] |
| FIFA Soccer 2002 | 2378 | N | N | N | $13.00 |
| FIFA Soccer 2003 | [illegible] | N | N | N | $20.00 |
| FIFA Soccer 2004 | 1629 | N | N | N | [illegible] |
| Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty | [illegible] | N | N | N | [illegible] |
| Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance | 175 | N | N | N | $20.00 |
| EyeToy: Play | [illegible] | N | N | N | $49.95 |
| Final Fantasy X | 36 | N | N | N | $15.00 |
| Final Fantasy X-2 | [illegible] | N | N | N | [illegible] |
| Final Fantasy XI | 13 | N | N | N | $28.00 |

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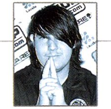

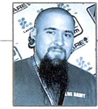

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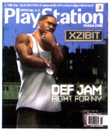
# INPUT

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

**I would like to commend Andrew Vestal** on his article in the October 2004 issue. He reminded me of something that gamers and journalists alike seem to forget about the games we play: fun. Just hearing that *Katamari Damacy* was "fun," I was instantly intrigued. People seem so entranced with better graphics, better sound, online play, and so forth. Everything is so "me too" these days, people ignore what could be fun. I'm still fuming that no one picked up *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*; it's a great game with great production values. It's fun, but because it doesn't feature a *GTA*-like world, it got ignored. Hell, they tried to sucker people into buying it by including a free copy of *Splinter Cell* at one point. So I plan on buying *Katamari Damacy* because one person said it was fun. Sure, it doesn't have 16-person frag matches or photo-realistic graphics, but who cares? You can have it because I'll be having fun for a change.

Matthew
via e-mail



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## GET HEALTHY WITH GTA

OK, I've held it in as long as I can, and judging by how frustrated I am right now, I should have spoken sooner. What the hell is Rockstar thinking? Why would I want to stop a perfectly good killing spree to...wait for it...run on a treadmill? For some reason, this sounded like a good idea? Who was it that stood up in the board meeting and said, "Why don't we make the player stop playing on a regular basis to go work out at the gym and eat fast food? And if you don't get the right combination of carbs and protein in your diet, we could make you a fat bastard...'cause God knows our players can relate to that." Well, incorporating health class into *The Godfather* films sounds like a smashingly successful (also read: dismal) way to spruce up the action. Maybe they could add wiping your ass and give points based on whether you scrunched or folded. They could rate us on fecal consistency in general or our ability to treat ringworm, for that matter! These things are lifelike...and completely uninteresting. My only hope is that Rockstar can pull off this idea, which sounds to me as exciting as *Pro Bass Fishing XXVI: A Day on Lavender Pond*.

Aaron Witt
via e-mail

Don't worry, eating and working out aren't going to get in the way of the actual game any more than driving a taxi or buying property gets in the way of the previous games. In a press release about the nutrition element of the game, in fact, Rockstar addressed this very concern: "This is not a game about eating!" the company said. "Eating is a fun component that is a part of increasing the player's control and interactivity with and customization of their individual character. Like in earlier installments in the series, it is all about providing the player with choices, not chores."

## RATINGS REACTION

I was quite shocked upon reading your articles about the ESRB in the past few issues. I never would have imagined that the individuals who rate games are only shown a video of the game footage. This system is completely backwards. I'll just go ahead and cite my favorite game, *Silent Hill 2*, as an example. The game is rated Mature for violence, blood, and gore. I have no problem with this description, but if a reviewer were to actually play *Silent Hill 2* from start to finish, he would encounter themes of child abuse, rape, euthanasia, and suicide. And because reviewers are only shown a video of the most extreme footage, these themes would not show up, as they are presented in spoken dialogue, and often in a subtle manner. If the ESRB wants to be taken seriously in my book, it will have to start playing the games it rates. The MPAA doesn't rate movies with their eyes shut.

Vincent Tranquillo
via e-mail

And let's not even talk about *Drakengaard*....

## GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

### STRAIGHT FROM THE OPM MESSAGE BOARD

Our monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at opm.1UP.com.

**DAS SOKOMMEN**

When Sony announced that it would be releasing a new patch in September to block more cheats and exploits, *SOCOM II* fans—both serious and casual—took notice. "They're resetting the rankings?" asked **Blitz05**. "Good, I haven't played *SOCOM II* in months, thanks to *FFXI*, so I probably lost my profile and rank anyway. Now I don't feel as bad about it because everyone's rank is being reset. Yay! Maybe I'll take a break from *FFXI* and give *SOCOM II* another go."

**Spideybuddy** concurred: "I'm kind of re-excited to play *SOCOM II* if this patch actually works. The reset rankings mean you can get a second chance at that high ranking, and fixing glitches is always a plus."

"I'm waiting for an expansion before I pop it back in my PS2," countered **TrinitySon**. "Patches are for pirates, expansions are for me." Your prayers are answered, buddy; turn to page 74.

**YOU GO, GIRLFRIEND**

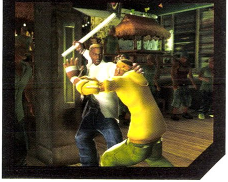
At least one person thought John was right on the money with his review of *SRS* and its girlfriend-swapping elements. "Unfortunately for [the people behind *SRS*], sex doesn't automatically get good reviews from *OPM*," said **iRSven**. "I'm glad someone finally stood up and said that they thought the whole 'girlfriend' thing was in bad taste, because it is. They should have called them 'whores' instead of 'girlfriends' because that's how they're being treated in the game. Could this be part of what repels women from the industry?"

"I hate how there's so much sex and such in all games," agreed **justnatecole**. "There are so many other things in the world that could appeal to gamers. But companies always go for sex because they are jackasses."

**RAPTASTIC**

Not everyone likes the idea of *Def Jam Fight for NY*. "Rap sucks!" said **Cloud_Strife_525**. "I don't see why there are all these rap games coming out. I think there should be some games that cover rock bands. Or even better: a game that's rap vs. rock."

"I think most of America would disagree," said **persuazion**. "These games sell millions of copies because kids all over have embraced hip-hop. You have 13-year-old suburban kids wearing doo-rags. The gamemakers see this and create a product to cater to the masses."



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## THE SMALLEST GAMER

I love your magazine, not to mention the demo disc. I just wanted to send you a picture of my 5-month-old daughter, Sarah, who seems to love the PS2 as much as I do....

Chris and Sarah Archuleta
via e-mail

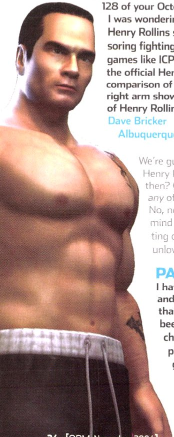
Wow, she loves that controller the way we love booze.

## ANGELS OF DEF

You know who's cool? Snoop Dogg. Ludacris. Busta Rhymes. Xzibit. Even Henry "The LIAR!" Rollins. So, why on God's green beans did I get the Bubba Sparxxx cover? Who decided to ship that one out? I subscribe to this mag. I can't just walk up to the newsstand and pick my favorite cover. I have to leave it up to you guys. And you choose Bubba Sparxxx? What the crap? My faith has been shaken. I'd take Sean Paul's mumbling ass over Mr. Ugly. Forty choices! How could you? Why would you? I know it's not a HUGE deal, but damn! You must hate me. You do, don't you?

MidiBeats@aol.com

Yep.



I saw the picture of the man on page 128 of your October 2004 issue and I was wondering why it resembled Henry Rollins so much. Is he sponsoring fighting games or wrestling games like ICP? A quick check of the official Henry Rollins site and a comparison of the tattoos on his right arm shows that the picture is of Henry Rollins.

Dave Bricker
Albuquerque, NM

We're guessing you didn't get Henry Rollins on your cover, then? Or read, you know, *any* of the cover feature? No, no, that's fine. Don't mind us; we'll just be sitting over here, feeling unloved.

## PAY TO PLAY

I have heard rumors, and I pray they are just that, that Sony has been considering charging people to play its online games. I have just recently delved into the online stuff. It's great, and each new game is getting better (can't wait for *Star Wars Battlefront*), but the idea of plopping down 50 bucks on a game only to have to pay to play the damn thing online is like a slap in the face and a punch in the gut. If Sony feels it has to charge people to go online, then it should just give you the game for free because then the company has you anyhow. I noticed your response in the October issue to a young man's plea to keep online games free. You said, "There are plenty of gamers old enough to pay 10 to 15 bucks a month without thinking twice." Well, I'm 30 years old, and I would certainly think twice.

Jason Morris
via e-mail

Sony is unlikely to launch a full-scale pay-to-play online service like Xbox Live for PS2. The company has said, however, that it is looking into charging nominal fees for upgrades and add-ons to current online games. No definite word yet, though.

## PICKY, PICKY

You guys mentioned that *Jak and Daxter* was too easy, with too much collecting involved. I seem to remember *Jak II* being bashed for its outrageous difficulty—and honestly, it could have used more stuff to collect. I know we're talking about opinions here, but honestly, what kind of difficulty do you guys expect from a platformer?

Jake
via e-mail

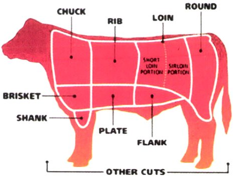
How about somewhere in between?

## DESTROY ALL BOVINES

Who would want to kill a cow for fun? It's as if the staff working on this project at Pandemic went home at night and tortured cats just for laughs. If you had the power of telekinesis, would you bash innocent creatures to bits? Since there is more than enough outright cruelty that already is taking place on farms and in slaughterhouses across the country, why make a joke out of such malevolent behavior toward defenseless animals? I was initially attracted to the game *Destroy All Humans*, but due to the inhumane content, I will spend my gaming dollars elsewhere, and others will follow suit.

Jeremy Caillé
Olympia, Washington

Don't kid yourself, Jeremy. If a cow ever got the chance, he'd eat you and everyone you care about. Besides, the cow is the tastiest animal we know! Just look at all the variety and bounty of deliciousness our bovine friends provide:



## GOING UNDERGROUND

### THE ONLY MAG WITH A DVD

**BEST DISC EVER**

I really liked *Battlefront*...I've played it three times already in the short time I've spent with the disc. *Def Jam* seemed cool...I like the whole story mode and it definitely looks good. The video for *Champions* has me all excited, since I loved the first game...and even though I have only watched the *Second Sight* demo be played so far, I must say that I'm much more impressed than I had been when I'd only seen videos. I was just so impressed by *Psi-Ops* that I didn't think *Second Sight* could touch it. But, they're awesome in their own separate ways.

irishmalt
via the message board

## BLOG OF THE MONTH

"After seeing all the media attention that the *GTA* series is getting, I had to try *Vice City* out and see if the game was truly worth all the hype, or if it was just overrated. I was drawn in by the game's story line. I was very impressed when I saw that the story's mature themes really were 'mature,' and not composed of excessive bodily functions and the orifices used to perform them. The actual gameplay, however, was not too good, in my opinion. Is it really THAT fun to see how much crime you can commit before you get 'busted'? I know that that is not the main goal of the game, but I just don't understand why that's one of the 'remarkable' things about *Vice City*, or about *GTA* in general."

**Kamaal Majeed**
ninjakamster.1UP.com

## CLUB OF THE MONTH

"We specialize in delivering doomsday through forms of doom, firedoom, icedoom, and other elements of doom. We enjoy doom, talking about doom, and doomsday. We anticipate the apocalypse to be very soon because 'soon' almost rhymes with 'doom.'"

Doomsday Brigade
doomsday-club.1UP.com

## ASK US ANYTHING!

### SERIOUSLY, ANYTHING

### SET FOR HEADSET

**Q. Will the headset I got with the original *SOCOM* work with *SOCOM II*?**

**Michael Segura**
via e-mail

**A.** Yes, it should work fine.

### WHAT'S THAT BRACKET?

**Q. When reading an article that contains quotes, I see sections that are in brackets. Can you explain this to me?**

**Frank Gordon**
Virginia Beach, VA

**A.** They indicate any alterations (edits for length, for example, as well as clarity) that writers or editors make to a quotation.

### TURNING JAPANESE

**Q. When is America going to get songs in *Karaoke Revolution* that are in other *BeMani* games, or even the Japanese versions of *KR*? It's not exactly a compelling buy for me unless I can sing "Dynamite Rave" or another Naoki song.**

**Robert Pflieger**
via e-mail

**A.** Our best guess: never. A U.S. version with Japanese tunes would probably sell about six copies. But dude, you're hardcore.

### HALF-LIFE OF HALF-LIFE

**Q. In which issue was the add-on for *Half-Life* included?**

**Bob Montana**
via e-mail

**A.** Issue 57. Enter △, □, Left, Right, ○, ⊗, Up, Down in the *Half-Life* Cheats menu, go to the newly created Extras menu, then insert the demo disc when the tray opens.

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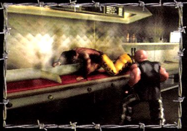

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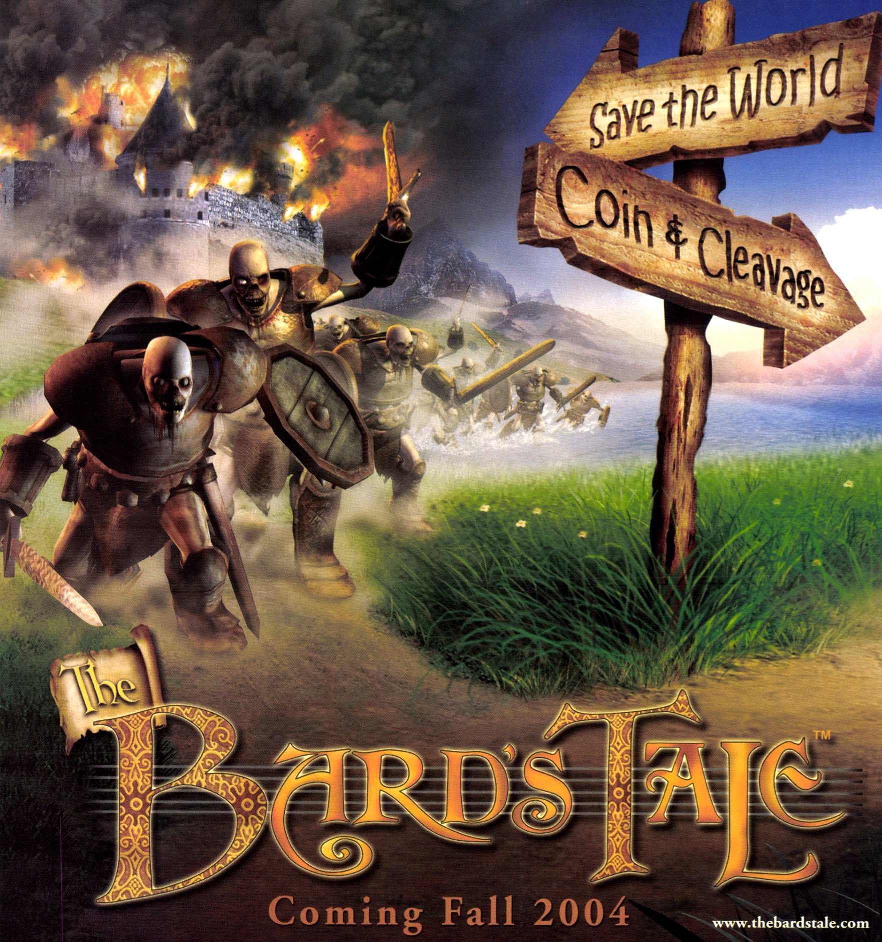

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*– PSM*

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*– Gamespy*

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*– Electronic Gaming Monthly*

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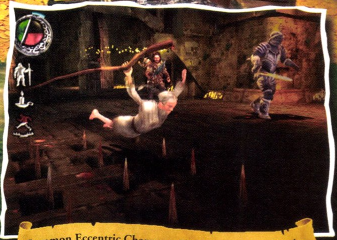
*- GamePro*



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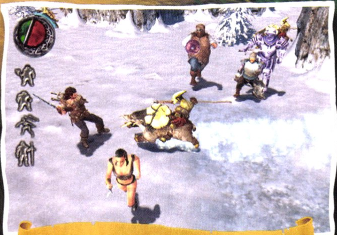

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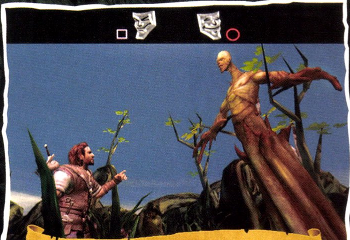

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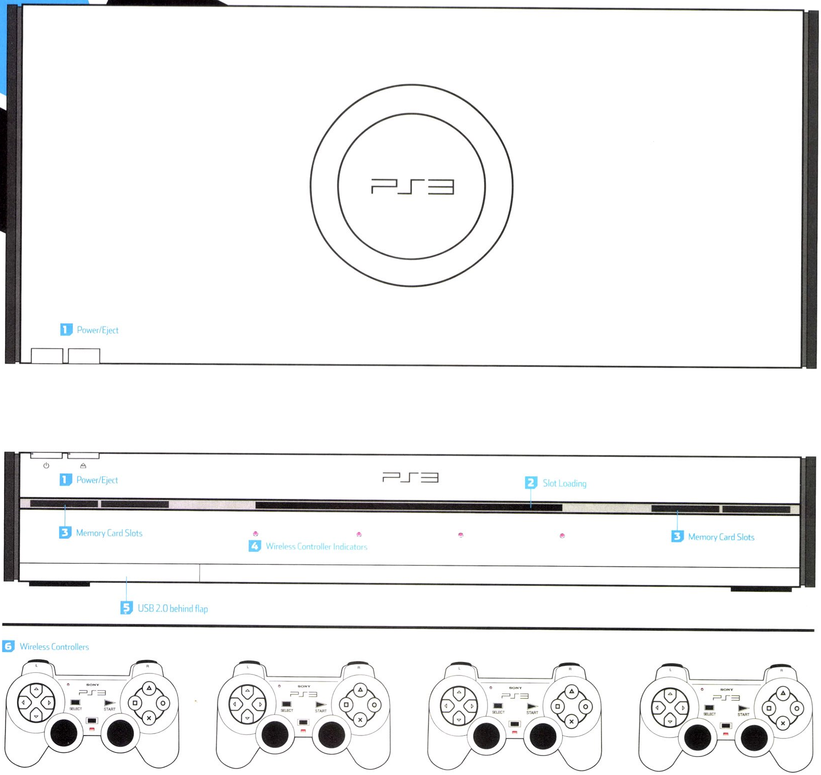
PS3
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4 Wireless Controller Indicators
3 Memory Card Slots
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# DREAM MACHINE

## THE PLAYSTATION 3 IS COMING, BUT WHEN, AND WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?

**On March 31,** Sony Computer Entertainment will unveil the first details of the PlayStation 3. Likely to be an early tech demo with an indication of approximate release date, this will be the first move in a series of announcements throughout 2005. What can we expect? We asked the experts...

### THE DEVELOPERS: ARE THEY READY?

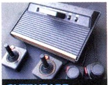
### THE BACKBONE OF THE PS3

**Even though the release of the PlayStation 3** is likely two years away, developers are already making preparations. We asked some of them what they're expecting out of the system and what Sony can do to make it the ultimate console, starting with online functionality.

"Online capabilities are a must," says Nobuya Nakazato, producer for Konami's *Neo Contra*. "And it should be for broadband only." Serkan Hassan, designer on Climax's *Crash 'N' Burn* also believes broadband should be the only choice. "I think using broadband as a minimum spec for online play is without a doubt the way to go. Having said that, there are of course the issues across each territory regarding the quality and speed of broadband connections. The lack of an agreed minimum specification will mean variations in gameplay quality in each territory." What about having these features built in? "In general, the concept of having to buy additional peripherals for a console is one that is foreign to most players," Hassan adds. "Therefore, it can only be a good thing to include as much functionality in the basic console package and allow consumers to make use of online capabilities if they wish to."

Including a hard drive is also a big priority, though there are some doubts. "A hard drive would seem [to be] a smart move, although there aren't many good examples of games that make good use of it," says Hassan. "Where are all the persistent game worlds that a hard drive could make possible? With demands for more storage and with the next generation of games allowing [for] more creativity and customization on the player's part, hard drives or some other internal high-capacity storage system would make good sense." In fact, for some developers, finding an alternate storage device that's functionally the same as a hard drive might be the way to go. "Sony is always putting together revolutionary technology that surprises us. If they create a new kind of technology that's even better, an HDD might not even be necessary," says Tsuyoshi Tanaka, producer on Capcom's *Devil May Cry 3*, *Resident Evil Outbreak File #2*, and *Monster Hunter*. "Of course, we would always welcome any technology that would make development easy for us."

## "IT'S NOT NECESSARY TO WATCH MOVIES ON A GAME MACHINE."



**OVERHEARD**
**"To hell with it! Make it look like the Atari 2600!" Climax's Serkan Hassan describing PS3's look.**

As with all new hardware, the design of the controller is just as important as the design of the console itself. Not surprisingly, the developers almost unanimously agree that the current controller—the DualShock 2—doesn't need drastic changes, but some minor refinements would be useful. "I've always liked Sony's controllers, from the PS1 to PS2. There's nothing I would add to them, except perhaps sorting out those L3 and R3 buttons and making them user-friendlier," says Hassan. "[But] please get rid of the cables! Nintendo's WaveBird is an excellent innovation, and the PS3 could benefit from a similar system. Just make sure the controllers can recharge themselves from the console, rather than expect the consumer to waste cash on batteries." Tanaka agrees: "If the hardware size is big and isn't something that can be carried around lightly or casually, then I would think that a wireless controller might be preferable. If the hardware is small and light, then I don't think there would be any problems with leaving things as they are now." But there are some who wouldn't mind seeing a hybrid controller become available. "I have no complaints over existing controllers," Nakazato adds. "Yet it'd be better if there [were] an additional device that incorporates mouse-type functions."

The number of connection ports for these controllers also seems to be an agreed-upon point, with each developer, except one, saying four ports is ideal. "I would definitely say four," Hassan responds. "This is one area that Nintendo in particular have always excelled over the competition. They have included four controller ports on their last two consoles and released a series of games on them that emphasizes four-player action. Two controller ports feels so limiting, and in some cases, it became a crucial factor in [deciding] which version of a game I would buy. I was after a copy of *Def Jam Vendetta* but opted for the GC version because my console had four ports as standard. In addition, the wealth of other good four-player games on GC meant I had already bought additional controllers. The Multitap is an outdated piece of equipment. I don't want to see a PS3 version."

Nor does he want to see the PS3 have DVD (or general movie) playback, one of the major features for the PS2 during its launch. "With stand-alone DVD players getting cheaper than VCRs ever were and with the format being as established as it is, surely there's no need. Who wants to use game controllers to watch a movie or spend more cash on a remote control," Hassan asks. "I don't feel it is necessary any more, and if it reduces the manufacturing costs of the console, then by all means remove it." The overall response is that there are other devices for watching movies. "It's not really necessary to watch movies on a game machine," says Tanaka. "There are plenty of DVD players out, including the PS2. However, I do think that it would be a good idea to have a chip function in the hardware that would play back MPEG-2 because it would make playing back movies inside the games much easier."

The only real point of contention is backward compatibility. Some stress the importance of being able to play PS2 games on the PS3 when it hits shelves. "I think it's an extremely important function," says Tanaka. "If there's no backward compatibility, there will be a lot of people with a bunch of game consoles lying all over the house. [Besides], I don't think the majority of people out there play more than a couple of game consoles." Hassan isn't as convinced. "Backward compatibility seemed useful in the early days of the PS2, when new titles were scarce and new owners already had a back catalog of PS1 titles. It would be easy to assume that those buying a PS3 would want to play PS2 games on it, but that would only be until their favorite games had been updated and released for the new console," he says. "I suspect the use of backward compatibility has been on a steady decline since the console's release, and if removing this feature lowers the cost of the console, I say go for it."

As for technical capabilities of the PS3, it's all about RAM and sheer processing power. "RAM is especially important for effectively running movies and graphics in games," says Tanaka. "This is always a big challenge for developers to do well within the existing parameters." But it boils down to a balance of sheer processing power and memory for most developers. "Processing capability and memory are wheels on a car. Either can go far beyond its ability," Nakazato says. "I would like to see a good balance between both elements." But even if there are some technical limitations in the PS3, developers have a way to get around them. "I've always been impressed with what can be achieved with tight RAM limits, and with streaming technology, it's possible to further reduce this problem," says Hassan. "I'd possibly go for more processing power because it's far more important to me that games run smoothly. I won't stand for playing PS3 titles that run [at] less than 60fps." We'll find out if Sony takes any of this into consideration when it officially takes the wraps off the PlayStation 3 in March.

## THE ANALYSTS: WHAT'S SONY'S STRATEGY?

### ANALYZING THE POSSIBILITIES

**We spoke to Steven Kent,** author of *The Ultimate History of Video Games*, and Michael Pachter, research analyst at Wedbush Morgan Securities, about the remaining life of PS2 and what the future could bring for PlayStation 3.

"It has been a very long time since we have seen a generation of game hardware as vibrant as this one," begins Kent. "If gamemakers are willing to do what it takes, if they are willing to continue to innovate, I think the old PS2 could go another three years." How so? "Back in 1990, which was the first full year of Genesis, we saw that it was the strongest year for the NES," he explains. "There were reasons for that. First, people did not know what to make of this new system from Sega. The last Sega console limped along and died. Also, 1990 happened to be the year of the games *Batman*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and especially *Super Mario Bros. 3*—the 17-million-unit-selling, best-selling non-packed-in game of all time. Since that time, gamers have become more Pavlovian. When major players like Nintendo, Sony, and Microsoft ring the new hardware bell, consumers start salivating. The Xbox Next bell has been rung, too early or not; I think that means that people will be ready to move on from PS2 in short order."

"We believe that it is a commonly held belief among investors and industry observers that current-generation consoles can only support software sales growth for a five-year period," begins Pachter. "We disagree with this."

> **"A NEXT-GENERATION CONSOLE COULD DEBUT AT ABOUT $500."**

**E=MC²**

**THE DEFINITION OF INSANITY**
The name of the Wedbush Morgan Securities report is taken from the quote attributed to Albert Einstein. "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results."

Why? "The basis for this misperception is historical, as each prior-generation console cycle was replaced after five years. However, it's important to note that this pattern has occurred only three times (in 1990, 1995, and 2000), and each time was for a different reason."

"A premature release for PS3 is fatal," says Kent. "That was part of what killed Dreamcast. Consumers need to be ready when you release your new hardware. They need to be bored of the last system and ready to upgrade to the next. And the signs right now suggest that while that time is coming, it has not yet arrived. Listen, hardware sales are down already. When the 2004 shooting match is done, I am betting that game sales will be down, too. If that is true, late 2005 will be the exact right time to launch a new game console. But if you launch too soon, people will not make the jump to your new system, and your system will be old news (3DO, Dreamcast) by the time folks are ready to make the jump."

"In recent investor calls held by Electronic Arts, Activision, and THQ, each company's management stated its intention to 'harvest' the current cycle through 2010," Pachter reveals. "Each management team lamented its participation in the last console transition, commenting on mistakes made in 'abandoning' the PS1 in favor of the PS2. Each pledged not to make that mistake again."

With this kind of transition likely, we asked our analysts to discuss the importance of backward compatibility in both the current and future generations. "There was a time when I would have argued that backward compatibility was all-important," argues Kent. "It made a huge difference with the launch of PlayStation 2. But the boost you get from backward compatibility is only important in that first year. Once you have an adequate library for your system, no one wants to go back to the old-school-looking games."

According to the Wedbush Morgan Securities report "The Definition of Insanity: Why the next console cycle will start off with a whimper," backward compatibility may be the last thing on Sony's mind for the PS3 because it's no longer in the "first-mover" position. This position dictates that whichever company is the first to release a new console will do everything it can to recreate successful launches from previous generations. That would include mimicry of the PlayStation 2 launch. "In our view, the only way the first-mover will experience the same result is if it exactly replicates the behavior of the first-mover in each of the last two cycles," says Pachter. "[It has to] introduce a new console that is backward compatible, [and] we do not expect Sony to seek first-mover advantage." In fact, the report says that Microsoft is expected to be the first to market, possibly as early as 2005, while Sony is expected to aim for 2006 based on the current timeline, with an announcement in Japan happening on March 31 of next year. Will Microsoft make Xbox Next backward compatible? That's something that the Xbox community continues to debate at some length, but based on what Pachter notes here, it seems it would be foolish not to.

Next, we pose the tough questions to our experts. What helps make a launch successful? What should the price be? What should the system be capable of? "I would say that a cadre of great games would be a must," begins Kent. "But Sony proved that wrong last time. There wasn't a great game to be found when PS2 launched in Japan and only one or two 'A' titles at the U.S. launch. If Sony can maintain its prestige status, then a successful launch is assured. Right now, however, I would argue that Microsoft has a better cool factor going for it than Sony, but *San Andreas* may equalize some of that Microsoft mojo. A new PlayStation needs a new *Grand Theft Auto* and a new *Gran Turismo* within months of launch, and it needs hardware that is demonstrably as good as the competitions'. An exclusive arrangement with Electronic Arts and/or Square Enix would be helpful, too."

"The success of past console-cycle transitions was determined to a greater extent by advances in software development than by advances in hardware technology," explains Pachter. "When Sony replaced the PS1 with the PS2, it increased the amount of information seen each second almost 40 fold. Unfortunately, providing greater information carries a greater cost, both in terms of time and money. The average PS1 game took a team of 10 to 12 developers approximately nine months to complete. The typical PS1 game costs publishers about $900,000 to produce. The average PS2 game currently takes a team of 15 to 24 developers approximately 20 months to complete. If we assume no changes in fixed or variable costs, it's easy to understand the estimated average cost of $3 million per PS2 game," he says. "The higher cost of next-generation console games will make it unlikely that many games will be produced. At present, most companies limit total game-development costs to approximately 20 percent of revenues. Activision (the third largest publisher) has an annual R&D budget of $140 million and produces about 45 games at an average cost of around $3 million each. If the company were to decide to develop games for an average cost of $8 million, it could only justify developing 15 to 20 games per year. We think that a more likely result in the launch year [for PS3] will be the development of three to five games carrying the $8 million price tag and the development of 30 to 35 games for the current-generation consoles. We therefore expect the U.S. publishers to produce only a handful of games for the next-generation consoles, and note that if there are few games available, hardware sales will be very slow to materialize."

Could the price of the PS3 hardware make a difference here? It has been rumored that the next generation may end up being priced at a more expensive level as part of the longer-life-cycle strategy. "The Sony price point is $299," Kent says firmly. "That is what we have been taught to expect. That is what we are willing to rush out in great droves to spend on Sony's miracle machines. Sony is a very slick company. I think it will continue to be able to deliver incredible hardware at that reasonable price point."

Pachter disagrees. "We expect Sony to introduce its next console with more functionality than its current console," says Pachter. "We base this conclusion on the introduction of the PSX, which has features that add about $500 per unit to the cost of production. We speculate that a next-generation console, should it include these features, could debut at about $500."

"Based on the GameCube and Dreamcast, we know that consumers have price expectations," admits Kent. "They set aside their $300, and given the choice between paying less or getting more for the expected $300 price point, they will spend the $300. I will say, though, that Sony's chic is a mitigating factor. No matter how you look at it, you need to know that people wanted PS2 over the competition because it was Sony."

This still holds true and will benefit Sony when PlayStation 3 is launched.

We Made the First Level.

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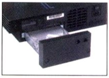
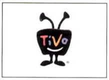
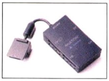
## THE READERS: WHAT DO YOU WANT IN PS3?

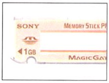
### THE MOST IMPORTANT OPINIONS: THOSE OF GAMERS

We asked members of Sony CEA's Gaming Advisory Panel what they would like to see in Sony's next-generation hardware. You can chat with them on the Web at gap-club.1UP.com.









PlayStation
METAL GEAR

### CONTROLLER

"The controller doesn't need to be changed. It is so fun and easy to use, and it just fits the hand so well. However, a new official color would be nice. Maybe white would work since it never happened with the PSX. Here is the big thing with the new controller—wireless! An official Sony wireless controller would be oh-so-cool."
—Jonathan Hunt

"If it isn't broken, don't fix it. I was so glad to find out they were staying with the same-design controller for PS2, along with adding the pressure-sensitive buttons—it's simply the best controller ever made. Something I'd like to see, though, is a Sony-brand wireless DualShock."
—Andrew Dick

"Now this is a sticky situation. I could very easily see Sony sticking with the same controller once again. The PlayStation controller is regarded by many to still be the most comfortable and "game-friendly" device in the console world, so if Sony were to stick with it, there would likely be few complaints. However, as new technologies continue to develop, it may require a slight evolution."
—Nick R. Coenen

"Standard wireless controllers—preferably rechargeable. They don't necessarily have to be standard, but along the lines of the Nintendo WaveBird: an official first-party wireless controller."
—Jonathan Petersen

### HARD DRIVE

"In March of 2004, I paid $100 for a seven-pound paperweight—the HDD. I had no intentions of playing *FFXI* and just wanted it for the media players, downloadable content (mainly this), and for getting rid of memory cards. So far, I haven't used it once! There are so many things that could be done with it. Why isn't anything being done with it now? I don't know, but in the future, it [had] better be used."
—Marc Sevick

"Since the competition already has a hard drive built in, Sony has to put [in] the effort to not only match what Microsoft has on the table, but to up the ante. But I hope Sony is out there trying to get publishers to give them certain stuff (maps, levels, skins) to make the hard drive prevalent and not just an added feature."
—Joe Larkin

"Included HDD would be good. I like the ability to download and use your own music on certain games on the Xbox. There's nothing more fun than rocking out to some of the latest MXPX while earning kudos in *PGR*. Sony really needs to take some pointers from Microsoft."
—Nichole

"After spending enough time on Xbox, my honest opinion is that the PS3 will need an HDD. It's time for us PS2 gamers to spend less time watching load screens and more time gasping at beautiful scenery."
—Jonathan Weinstein

"I honestly don't think it should be built in. I know it probably will be, but it shouldn't. Many people have bought the HDD for the PS2, and right now its only real use is for *FFXI*. It would mean $100 down the drain for those who have already purchased one, so I think the HDD for the PS2 should be compatible with the PS3. Plus, it would lower production cost for the PS3, making it cheaper. A good idea would be to put out a system that includes a newer, larger capacity HDD built in, and then a basic model that doesn't."
—Jonathan Hunt

**"IN MARCH OF 2004, I PAID $100 FOR A SEVEN-POUND PAPERWEIGHT."**

### ONLINE

"Online support built in with broadband and narrowband options. No excuse not to play online. [Also, we need] PS3 Live. A standard online connection with friends lists and chatting where all games can be connected to and played."
—Jonathan Petersen

"Wireless Internet connectivity should be addressed. Online gaming is the way of the future, and there is no better way to streamline this system than by making it wireless. It would be great to have a gaming console with 802.11g."
—Jonathan Hunt

"The modem has to be built in. I'm seriously surprised how well online gaming has succeeded for the PS2, mainly because you had to buy an extra peripheral just to be able to play (well, before they started selling the PS2 bundled with the modem). If Sony wants to succeed in the online-gaming market, you should be able to buy the PS3 on the release date, go home with a couple online-capable games, and instantly be able to play over the Internet without needing to buy more peripherals."
—Andrew Dick

### EXTRAS

"I don't really know about the whole TiVo thing, so I personally wouldn't go for that. The rumors say there are going to be two models of the PS3 released—the basic gaming system and the TiVo one with all the bells and whistles. I'd like something in between actually, but I wouldn't want a CD/DVD burner in my PS2 since that's what computers are for."
—Marc Sevick

"Four controller slots built in! Is Sony still in the Stone Age? Multitaps were acceptable peripherals back in the 16-bit days. You could even buy a multitap for the NES (I still have mine), but it's now a decade or two later and I still have to buy a multitap if I happen to have more then just one friend over to play some games."
—Andrew Dick

"Memory Stick media. Sony has Memory Sticks as portable media for cameras, etc. This technology should be used as the portable memory storage for the PS3."
—Jonathan Petersen

"The PS3 should play all forms of PS games [including PS1 and PS2]."
—Erin Ali

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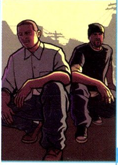
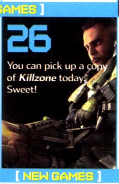
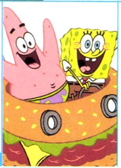
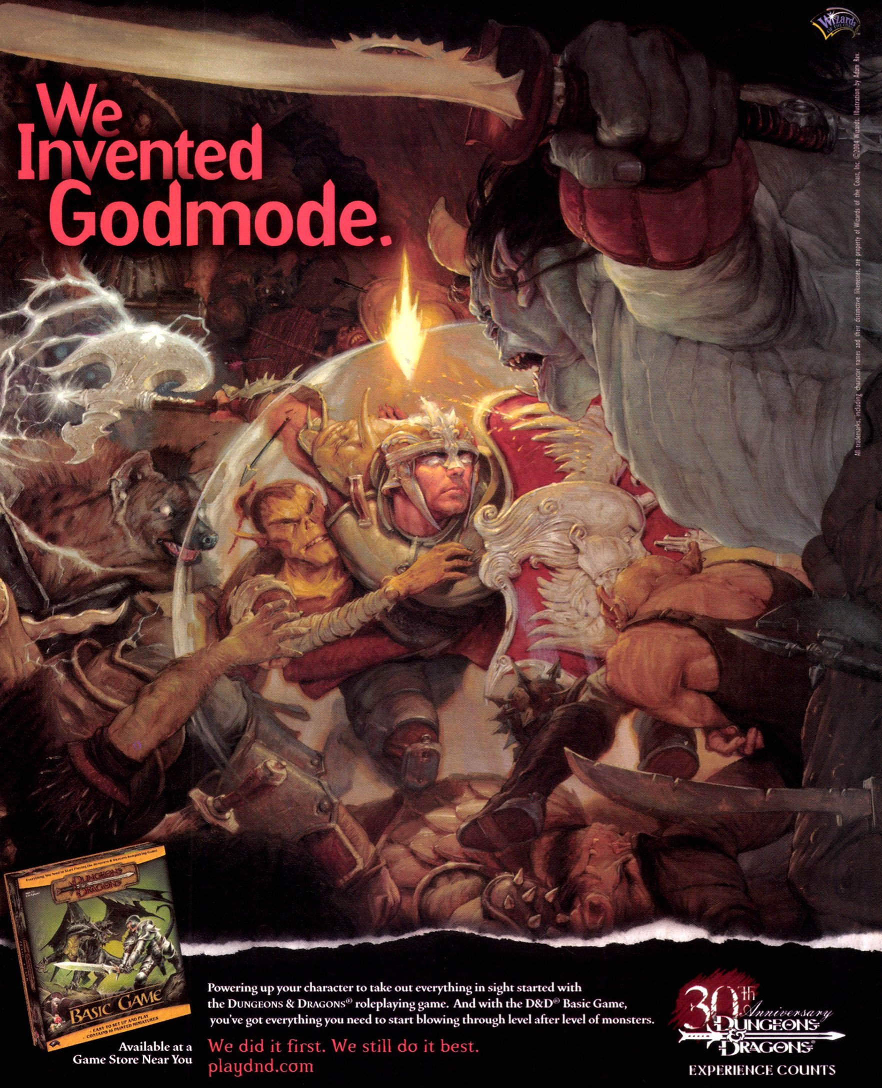
## THE MONTH AHEAD FOR YOU AND YOUR PLAYSTATION 2

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What's she so happy about? It's ***Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*** month! | | | | | **01**<br>***Shark Tale*** is in theaters. | **02** |
| **03**<br>***The Day After Tomorrow*** will be out on DVD the day after tomorrow. | **04**<br>***Mortal Kombat: Deception*** ships today. If you preordered it, you can pick it up tonight.<br>[ NEW GAMES ] | **05**<br>***ESPN NBA 2005*** and ***NBA Live 2005*** will be in stores today, along with ***Conflict: Vietnam, Robotech Invasion, Leisure Suit Larry, Backyard Wrestling 2,*** and ***THUG 2.*** | | | **08**<br>***Taxi,*** with Queen Latifah and Jimmy Fallon, ***Friday Night Lights,*** and the Hilary Duff vehicle ***Raise Your Voice*** represent your new movie choices tonight. | **09**<br>**John Lennon** would have been 64 today. **Sharon Osbourne** is 52, and ***Star Trek***'s latest captain, **Scott Bakula,** is 50. |
| **10** | **11**<br>***King of Fighters: Maximum Impact*** and ***Tak 2*** are out today. Tomorrow, you'll see ***Under the Skin, FIFA Soccer 2005,*** and ***Get On Da Mic*** on shelves. | **12**<br>Remember HBO's sexy sitcom ***Dream On***? If you do, you'll be pleased to know it's out on DVD today.<br>[ NEW GAMES ] | **13** | **14**<br>**Digital Life** starts at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York and runs through Sunday. Come and see us! We'll be hanging out in the GameOn area playing games and stuff. | **15**<br>***Batman Begins*** star Christian Bale shed 60 pounds to appear as the depressingly messed-up Trevor Reznik in ***The Machinist.*** | **16**<br>**Eminem** celebrates birthday number 32 tomorrow. |
|  | **18**<br>The wait is over! ***Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*** ships today. Pick it up at midnight and take the rest of the week off!<br>[ NEW GAMES ] | **19**<br>***Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*** is out on DVD today. So is ***Van Helsing*** and the director's cut of ***Hellboy. OPM*** fave ***The Bard's Tale*** is out today too. Yay! | | | **22**<br>***Surviving Christmas*** is out. It has Ben Affleck in it. Alternatively, check out Sarah Michelle Gellar in ***The Grudge.*** It's creepy, it's set in Tokyo, and Buffy's in it. | **23** |
| **24/31**<br>It's Halloween! Go do something scary. Say, like dressing up as your favorite game character. | **25**<br>Bandai's ***Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*** (on this month's DVD) hits stores today, so do ***Ace Combat 5*** and ***Neo Contra.*** | **26**<br><br>You can pick up a copy of ***Killzone*** today. Sweet!<br>[ NEW GAMES ] | **27**<br>The game based on ***The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie*** is out today, as is the game based on ***The Incredibles.*** |  | **29**<br>Ray Romano, Rip Torn (the guy throwing the wrenches in *Dodgeball*), and Hank "Apu" Azaria star in ***Eulogy,*** out today. If you want to impress a date, go see Jamie Foxx in ***Ray.*** | **30**<br>Tomorrow's not the only day for ghosts—it's the official Haunted Refrigerator Day. |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Online play not available on all platforms. See back of product packs for details. INTERNET CONNECTION required for online play. PlayStation 2 online play requires Internet Connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation 2) and Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately). Check platform box for online play.

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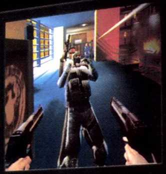

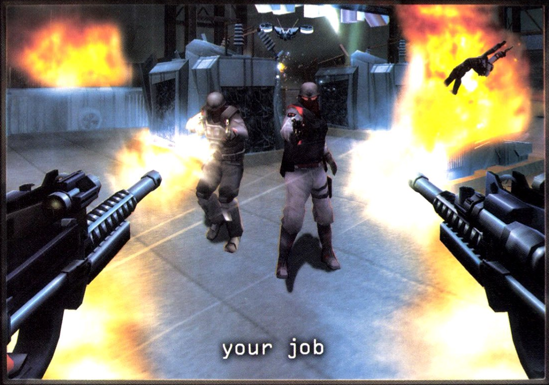

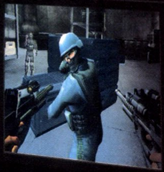

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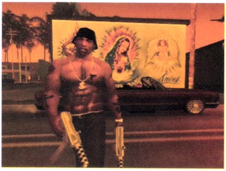
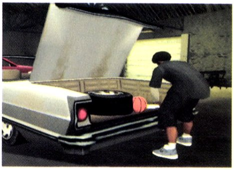
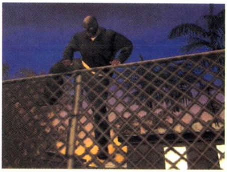






**A LITTLE B&E**

One thing we haven't touched on much in our *San Andreas* coverage is the ability to break into houses and steal ordinary citizens' hard-earned goods. This is largely because Rockstar hasn't given up much detail so far, but rest assured you will be able to invade people's homes.

# GTA: SAN ANDREAS

## ROCKSTAR'S DAN HOUSER LOVES THE '90s

***Grand Theft Auto III* felt like a new world.** *Vice City* felt like the '80s in *GTA3*'s clothing. So what does *GTA: San Andreas* feel like? An early '90s cultural statement—with the emphasis on state.

A massively sized landscape, attempting a grandiosity like no other game before it, *San Andreas* never skimps in its attempts at mirroring the three cities it imitates: Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Vegas. Nor does it leave out any of the California-inspired wildlife in between. But why this state, this time period, this time?

"During that time period in America, culturally—particularly since Chicago fell off the map—there were constant wars between New York and Los Angeles, and which was hotter," says *San Andreas'* director, Dan Houser. "And [in the early '90s], there's no question: L.A. was the place. The West Coast was the place."

Culturally, this game—like *Vice City* did with the '80s—does its best impersonation of a U.S. time period. This one's much more volatile with its gangsta rap, its gang bangin', and the importance lent to the color of one's clothing. It clearly matches up with the real-life spirit of the early '90s epoch—when car chases were considered a spectator sport. Thing is, no matter how exact it is to the time period, it has to be fun to play. The story in *Vice City* started out brilliantly, then swooned. *San Andreas* is more than three times the size, so will there be a story capable of supporting it?

"The story this time is really fun," promises Houser. "It has a long, meandering quality to it that pulls you through this game geographically. The characters range from paranoid hippies to Triads to wannabe pop stars. And all points in between."

> **"IN THE EARLY '90s, L.A. WAS THE PLACE."**

Still, rumors say that the game can take as long as 150 hours to finish, and no one at Rockstar is denying them. That's some serious hourage. "There are so many things to do," says Houser. "In terms of the flow, we're making this up as we go along. We're not copying anyone in the nonlinear-meets-linear kind of stuff. We're still not doing it perfectly, but I think we've made a lot of progress since *Vice City*. And that's one of the ways two years has made a difference." « *Todd Zuniga*

**Pub.** Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar North **Release** October 19

# THE VOICE OF CJ

## MEET YOUNG MAYLAY. YOU'LL BE HEARING A LOT ABOUT HIM

**Rockstar Games** might be a New York company, but the way it signed the voice of its newest front man is vintage L.A.—which is fitting for the West Coast–set *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*. It went down like this: Rockstar contacted filmmaker/hip-hoptician DJ Pooh, and they hit it off. Dan Houser, *San Andreas'* director, says of Pooh, "He's amazing for what we wanted. We thought we were looking for someone to help us with writing. But you look at the films he's made (*Friday, Next Friday*) and you see he's so multiskilled, plus he has ridiculous hip-hop credibility." Then Rockstar asked Pooh about voices for its lead character, CJ. Pooh said he had the perfect guy in mind and phoned a star in the making, Young Maylay. *San Andreas'* director heard the conversation, and the rest is history. "He's got an awesome voice," says Houser. "A great, powerful, strong voice. We want to work with guys like Maylay. They're really enthusiastic, and they understand ['90s L.A.], and they know the slang. These guys will tell us, 'No, trust me, we wouldn't say that.' So we say, 'Fine, change it.' It makes it so much more authentic."

**OPM** How'd you get involved with *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*?

**YOUNG MAYLAY** Actually, it was through DJ Pooh. He's been a producer forever, and I came up through his camp. I was introduced, and then the Rockstar family picked me up. Dan Houser heard me on the Nextel when he was with Pooh. I didn't know that Dan was listening, and I guess he was getting the idea about me being the voice right then. I mean, I was just being a conversating fool. Oh yeah, and it wasn't just like I got the job directly. I had to go through the same steps as everyone else did.

**OPM** Have you put out any albums?

**YM** I've done some underground s*** and a couple compilations here and there to keep the buzz going.

**OPM** So, did you have chances to ad-lib for authenticity's sake?

**YM** Exactly. You know, I'm glad they had the confidence in me. They weren't just saying, "Shut up and do what we tell you."

**OPM** What makes CJ real as a character to you?

**YM** What makes CJ real to me? He's not real to me. He's a character. I put Maylay on CJ. I make him as much me as I can, without too much changing of the script.

**OPM** When you first got the script, did you feel like it was definitely early '90s West Coast?

**YM** It was there. Really, you look at this, and it's a videogame, and you know that this is the real s***. Everything from that time period is squeezed into this game. The different stuff that you go through, it's going to take you awhile to finish it. It's the real stuff.

**OPM** Did you play the other *Grand Theft Autos*?

**YM** I don't play games much, and if I can't get past a mission, I get mad and I'll have someone else do it. But this is going to be the one. I've seen them all, playing the game before I met anyone from Rockstar.

**OPM** What's your favorite part of *San Andreas*?

**YM** It's not just one thing that I'm like, "Aww, s***." It's a lot of things. I don't want to give up no s*** that [I] ain't supposed to give up. But there's so much s*** involved in the game. There's so much s*** to do in between that'll have you not thinking about the missions anymore because of all the tight s*** in there. «

# RATCHET & CLANK UP YOUR ARSENAL

## YOU'VE WON AN ALL-EXPENSES-PAID TOUR OF MARCADIA

**If you're a fan** of platform games at all, you've probably played at least one of the previous *Ratchet* games. And you probably already know what to expect from *Up Your Arsenal*: huge, free-roaming levels; dozens of crazy weapons and gadgets; lots of collectibles; and a somewhat snarky sense of humor.

But there's also plenty you may not be expecting, and this month we're able to show you some of the all-new goodies firsthand on the demo disc.

**Marcadia** This is your standard run-and-gun *Ratchet* level, if perhaps a bit shorter than most. Can you find the two titanium bolts? Look to your left as you go into the first big plaza, then to your right in the next room.

**Marcadia Battlefield** Get to the end of Marcadia and you'll gain access to the first battlefield mission. The battlefield is a great place to work on upgrading your weapons. Be warned that your first few forays will end badly—but it won't take long before your weapon of choice starts getting more powerful.

**Laser Defense Facility** This is a bit of a puzzle-based level, and you will use one of the new gadgets, the refractor. By equipping the refractor, you can step into the path of a laser and redirect it toward the triggers that unlock the doors—or use it to fry enemies.

**Captain Qwark's Vid-Comic** Side-scrolling platform action? In a *Ratchet* game? You wouldn't know it by playing just this one level, but these "vid-comics" are actually integral to the plot of the game. It seems poor Captain Qwark has lost his memory—but luckily, his most famous exploits were chronicled in a series of six interactive "vid-comics." By playing through these six comics, Ratchet will help Qwark get his memory back and ultimately learn what he and Clank need to do to save the galaxy from Dr. Nefarious.

**Hoven Gorge** *Up Your Arsenal*'s splitscreen play is identical to its all-new online mode—you know, except for the online part. Make sure you capture one of the central nodes to get access to the jeep.

Excited yet? Yeah, we thought so. Come back next month for our review of the final game. «

Pub. Sony CEA Dev. Insomniac Release November

PlayStation

### PLAY THE DEMO!

If you want your first real-life taste of *Up Your Arsenal*, it's as close as the disc in this magazine.

### YOUR ARSENAL
#### THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR ANY JOB

Since you can access most of the demo from within the Marcadia level—and it won't time out unless you leave it unpaused for too long—you can spend as much time upgrading your weapons as you want. See if you can build up this maxed-out arsenal.

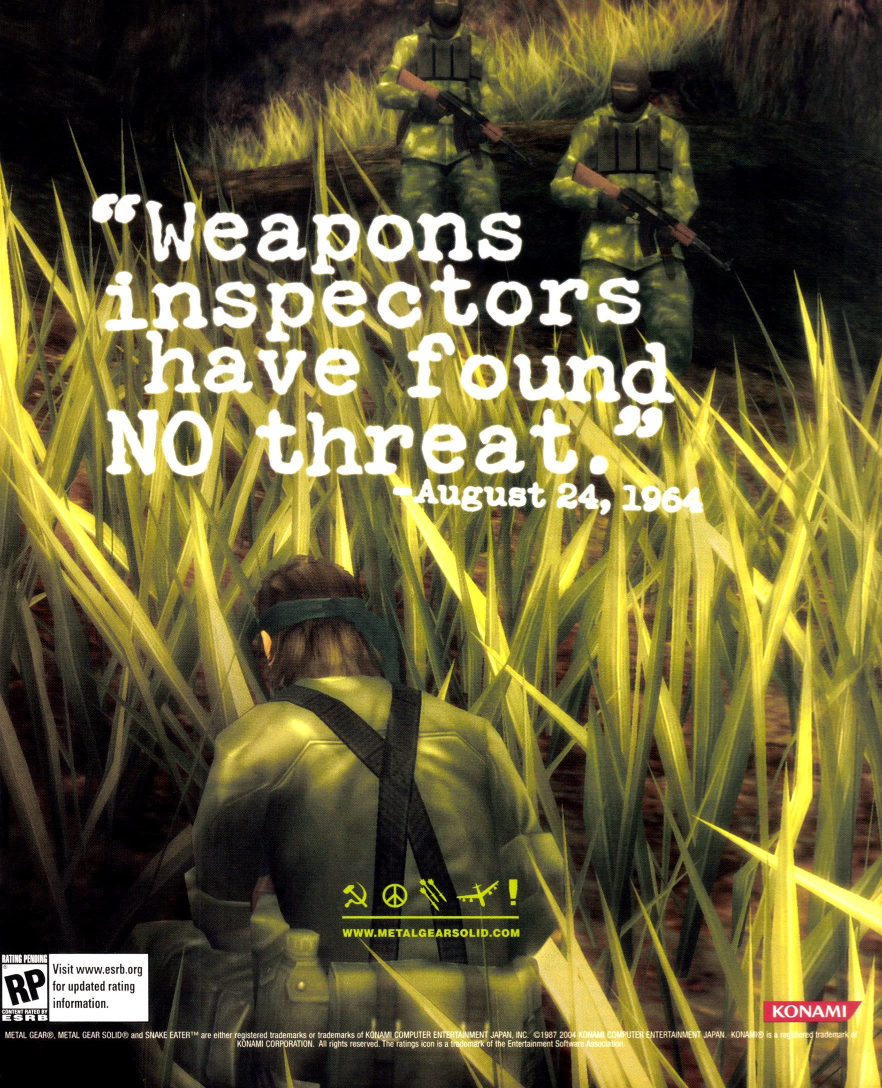
**N90 Hurricane** The rapid-fire machine-gun action is hardly necessary, since one hit will take out just about any enemy in the demo.

**Quantum Whip** This nasty hand-to-hand weapon sends out an additional projectile shock wave with every swing.

**Shock Cannon** When only the nastiest will do—the shock cannon takes out a wide spread of enemies in one shot.

**Flux Rifle** You can buy this sniper rifle for 10,000 bolts. It's practically a one-shot kill at its basic level, but upgrade it to the splitter rifle and it's faster, shoots farther, and does more damage.

**Rift Inducer** A hefty 20,000 bolts will buy you this beauty. It's not upgradeable, but when you have a weapon that creates tiny black holes that suck enemies to their doom, do you really need to upgrade it?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# GAME OVER

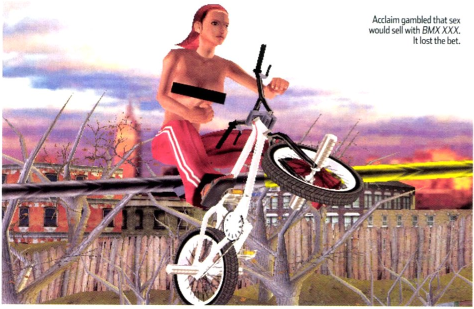
## WHERE ACCLAIM WENT WRONG

**After Acclaim's continued** financial problems and commercial failures, the drowning company finally filed for bankruptcy liquidation in early September. Unfortunately, representatives were unavailable to comment on the status of several games, including the promising shooter *Red Star*, but chances are you'll see most of them in some form or another. Everyone saw Acclaim's downfall coming, but other companies are experiencing problems as well. So why is it that some companies, such as Electronic Arts, continue to flourish while others flounder?

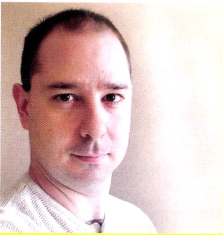
"EA is where it is partly because of some really good acquisitions but mostly because it has done a great job of turning its hits into multimillion sellers," says John Taylor, an analyst with Arcadia Investment. "Consumers are just showing more demand for established brands, and the same goes for Activision—it's there because of the [excellent execution] of its properties."

Conversely, Take-Two, the publisher of the *Grand Theft Auto* series, hasn't been able to achieve the same sort of success year-round that EA and Activision have had, but unlike Acclaim, it still has one huge property to bank on. "[Take-Two] has more of a mixed history," says Taylor. "It's had success with the *Grand Theft Auto* franchise, but they haven't completely weaned themselves from doing games that have not done particularly large numbers." Take-Two expects sales of *GTA: San Andreas* to hit the 10 million mark.

Acclaim tried to jump ahead of the curve with the mature title *BMX XXX*, hoping to make its mark in a field that other companies have been reluctant to embrace. However, it learned the hard way that a mature audience won't automatically gravitate toward an M-rated game just because of its gratuitous display of T&A. "[A lot] of companies are still trying to adapt to the changes in tastes that come with an older audience," says Taylor. "[That audience] is really dominating the industry right now." Maybe someday they'll figure out that the key is good gameplay. «



Acclaim gambled that sex would sell with *BMX XXX*. It lost the bet.



# THE WATCHDOG

## THE GAMER MAJORITY?

**JOHN SCALZI** is our man keeping an eye on things for the benefit of all gamers. You can see more of his thoughts at www.scalzi.com.

**Here's an interesting question** for you to consider as you ponder your vote in the upcoming elections: At what point in the future will gamers be the majority of American voters? Don't laugh; it's entirely possible. Indeed, depending on how loose your definition of "gamer" is, it's even probable.

Here's the math: According to the Entertainment Software Association, half of all Americans older than age 6 already play videogames. This would seem to suggest that there's already a majority, but "all Americans" includes those under 18. While older Americans are playing videogames in larger numbers as time goes on, there's still not an equal distribution of videogame players across demographics. It's still weighted heavily toward the 35-and-under set—say, all the Atari-playing Gen-Xers, their younger brothers and sisters, and all their kids (at least the ones that can pick up a controller).

If the large majority of the 35-and-under set plays videogames and the youngest Americans continue to pick up the controllers and play, then it's simply a matter of time. In 10 years, the large majority of Americans 45 and under will play videogames for recreation—in 20, the majority of people 55 and under. In 2024, no one will be surprised that grandma plays games any more than anyone today is surprised that grandpa just came back from an Eagles concert. As gamers become the mainstream, the perception of videogames (and of their threat level) is likely to change.

### HOW MANY WILL VOTE FOR POLICIES BENEFICIAL TO GAMERS?

But even if the large majority of Americans are gamers, it doesn't necessarily follow that the majority of voters would be. Only 6 out of 10 eligible Americans were registered to vote in the last presidential election, and of those, only 8 out of 10 actually voted—which means that roughly half of adult Americans bailed on voting. Yes, it's the dumb half—but how many gamers will be in that half? And among the gamers who do vote, how many will vote for politicians and policies that are beneficial to gamers? After all, in 15 years, the 20-year-old gleefully playing *GTA: San Andreas* will be the 35-year-old parent of two who finds it disturbing when the 5-year-old suddenly takes an interest in pixilated blood and gore, and that parent may want the government to step in and do something about it. People—or at least their voting priorities—do change.

So it's possible that even when most adults are gamers—and possibly the majority of voters are gamers—many of the issues that affect gamers today will still be on the table for discussion and debate. The message to gamers, then, should be clear: If you want a true gamer majority, then you had better get out there and vote your agenda. Others will be more than happy to vote their agenda in your absence. «

IT TAKES A REAL TRIGGER TO MAKE A REAL SHOOTER.

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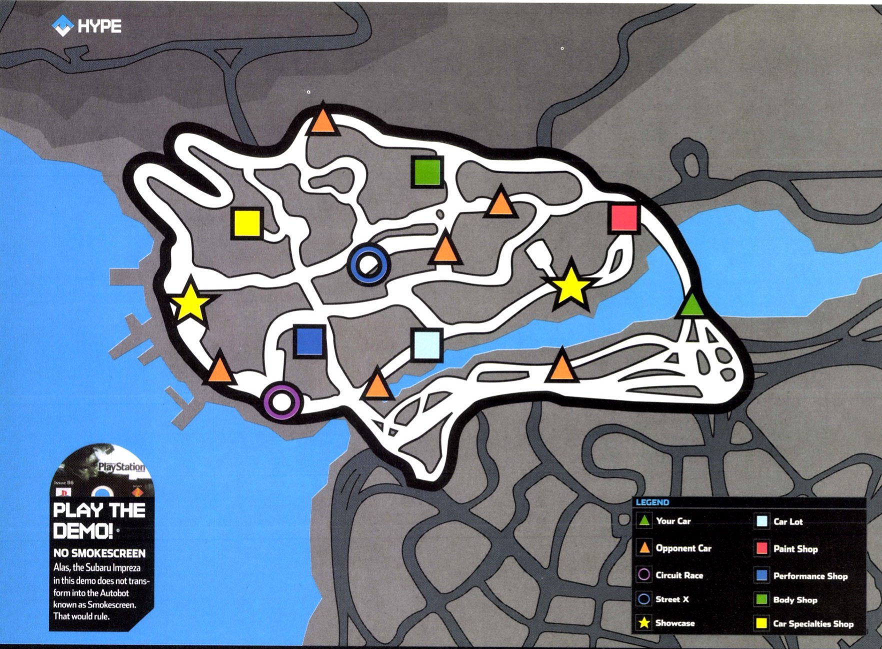

**LEGEND**

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## PLAY THE DEMO!

**NO SMOKESCREEN**

Alas, the Subaru Impreza in this demo does not transform into the Autobot known as Smokescreen. That would rule.

# NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MONTH'S PLAYABLE DEMO

**It's not just *Metal Gear Solid 3*** that makes this month's demo disc so great. We also have a huge demo of the sequel to one of the biggest games of 2003. To help you find everything the demo has to offer, we hooked up with the development team at Electronic Arts to make sure we could point you in the right direction while wandering around the gigantic playable area available.

### WHAT'S THAT CAR?

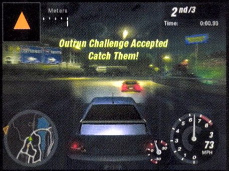
The sweet wheels you drive in the demo are those of the Mitsubishi Evolution VIII. It's the only car in the demo, but there are multiple versions of it you can find if you hunt around. Visit the different stores (you can locate them on the map) to see the car with multiple body kits and goodies. You can also take it to the paint shop (the red square on the map) and fool around with five of the basic colors the game offers. The final game will offer many more, including funky metallic and pearlescent paint jobs.

### WHERE AM I?

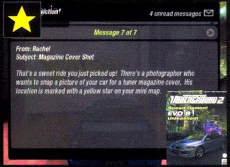
You're in Beacon Hill, which is one of the game's five neighborhoods. This area represents roughly 15 percent of the total drivable area of the final game.

## WHAT SHOULD I TRY?

There are a number of different types of events for you to try in the demo that showcase some of the new stuff in *Underground 2*. The first thing to do is to just cruise around and check out the scenery. Every part of the city has been modeled so that it's unique, and every building is different. There's no repeated cookie-cutter architecture, so it feels a lot more organic and "real" than the first game. Along with the main streets that you can see on the map, you'll also find some alleys and backstreets, too, which can be fun to hurtle through at top speed.



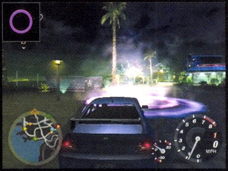
Find an orange triangle on the map. See it moving? That's because it's a car you can challenge. Track him down and follow the onscreen prompts and you can get yourself into your first race. The demo has an unlimited supply of these challenges, so you can just keep chasing after these guys.



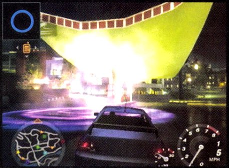
From: Rachel
Subject: Magazine Cover Shot

That's a sweet ride you just picked up! There's a photographer who wants to snap a picture of your car for a tuner magazine cover. His location is marked with a yellow star on your mini map.

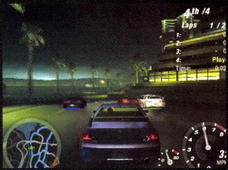
Look for a yellow star on the map; this is a showcase event location. Follow the instructions to hook up with the photographer who wants to shoot your ride for a magazine cover. Remember the magazines featured in the first *Underground*? Well, now this aspect serves as more than just a reward for winning a race—it has more in common with *SSX 3*'s photo shoots.



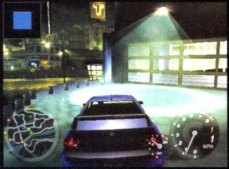
Want some traditional racing action? Drive to the purple circle and jump into a circuit race. Watch out for Derek in the black Mitsubishi 3000GT—he's a tough guy to beat, and he has no problem cutting you off. You'll also see all of the other cars featured in this demo during this race: the Subaru WRX STi, the 3000GT, and the Nissan 350Z. Including the Evo, these are just four of the 30 cars that will appear in the final game.



Want to try something new? Look for the blue circle and try out a Street-X race. This is a new type of challenge that's a bit like a circuit race, but it's on a course similar to *Underground*'s more complex drift races. Think of it like a grand prix in a parking lot.



Want to try out the new nitrous system? Tuck in behind your opponents during a race and draft them to build up your NOS supply.



To get an idea of how the cars feel when upgraded, try all of the races in the standard Evo that you get when the demo starts, and then head to the dark blue square on the map. This is the performance shop, and here you can upgrade all of the parts in the Evo to level 2. You should see a significant difference when you return to all of those events.

## WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

The *Underground 2* demo features three of the licensed tunes from the final game. If you like what you hear and you're wondering who the bands are, here are the details so you can check 'em out on iTunes or something.

"The Keys to Life vs. 15 Minutes of Fame"
Atmosphere
From the album *Seven's Travels*

"Switch/Twitch"
Fluke
From the album *Puppy*

"Notice of Eviction"
The Bronx
From the album *The Bronx*

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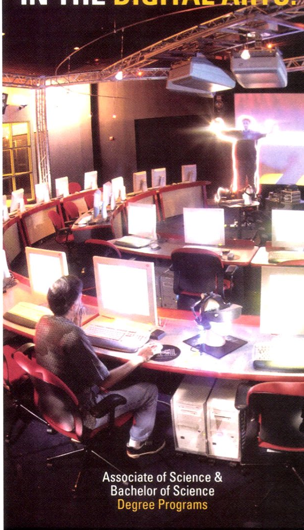

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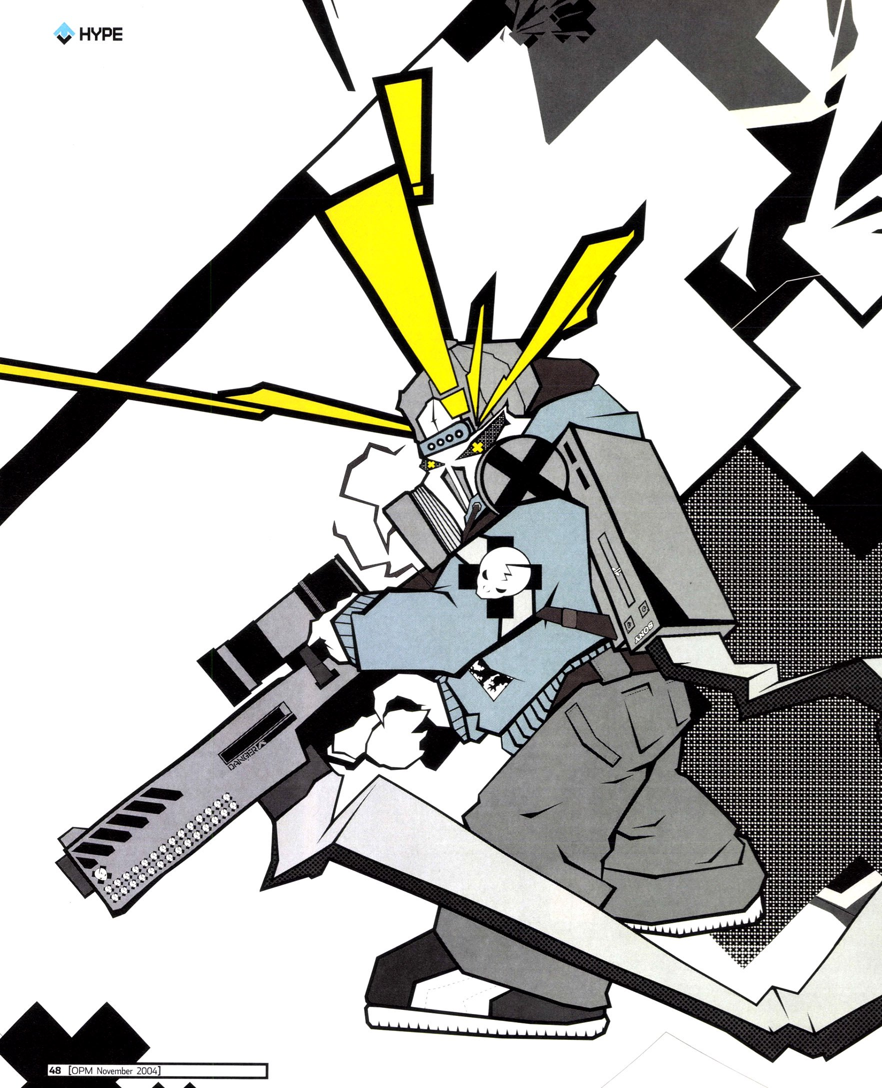
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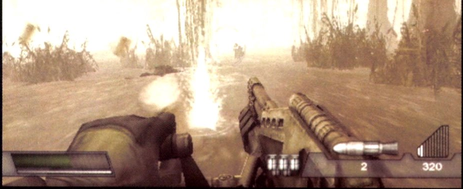


### KILLZONE
**EVERYONE SAYS IT'S LIKE *HALO*, BUT...**

**Now that we've played *Killzone*** for an extended period of time, we can safely say that it's not really anything like *Halo* at all. To clarify, yes, it is possibly the most visually arresting first-person shooter on PS2. Yes, it is somewhat different from other games in the genre in that it's set in the future, something that makes it oddly unusual given the recent wash of "realistic" shooters. Yes, it will boast a bunch of multiplayer modes that should keep you very happy. If you don't believe our claim that it's good, make sure you come back next month, because we'll have an exclusive playable demo for you.

Back to the *Halo* comparison, though, or not, as the case may be; now that we've played *Killzone* a lot, it actually reminds us of *Medal of Honor* most. Imagine *Frontline* gone sci-fi with dropships and glowy-eyed Helghast instead of tanks and Nazis—that's sort of the vibe you get. You feel very much a part of a broader experience. You're in a war, and you're surrounded by other troops that all have their own blasting to get on with. As we've mentioned before, there are four different characters for you to play as: Templar, the good old-fashioned all-rounder; Luger, the stealthy ninja type; Rico, the heavy-weapons expert; and Hakha, the character we haven't been able to talk about yet. He's a Helghast defector you can use to infiltrate enemy units, which is a nice twist on the usual sort of character and, in a way, is another element that brings the *Medal of Honor* games to mind.

**Pub.** SCEA **Dev.** Guerrilla **Release** November

# SHOOT FIRST

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS?

**On November 9,** a genre-defining first-person shooter will be released...and it's not a PlayStation 2 game. We get all the love in every other area, but *Halo* and its imminent sibling are where all the heat is in this genre. Why is this? And why isn't there a shining beacon of first-person-shooter goodness on PS2 after all this time? This may all be about to change. Over the next few months, there's a veritable deluge of blasting goodness coming, and we've gathered them all together for you here. We've also pulled together a group of folks responsible for the coming violence and charged them with predicting the future and explaining why *Halo* is considered the definitive console shooter.

"Some would argue that *Medal of Honor* is the definitive console shooter," argues Morgan Gray, the lead designer on *Project: Snowblind* at Crystal Dynamics. "It is all a matter of taste. I would think that with a relative lack of competition on the Xbox, *Halo* was able to own that platform. There have been more shooters on the PS2, and as such, it has been much harder to be that breakout success. *Halo* was remarkable, though; I would think the biggest thing it did was remove the preconception that consoles weren't a good fit for shooters. From the controls to the rich multiplayer experience, *Halo* delivered as good, if not better than, as its PC counterparts."

"Definitive? No. But a benchmark? Yes," says Alastair Burns, the producer of *Killzone* at Guerrilla Games. "What could you consider the definitive shooter on console? In our opinion, *GoldenEye* really proved to people that you could make a fantastic FPS experience on console—they got the mechanics really smooth, the action is still exciting, and each mission was a bite-size chunk. *Halo* expanded people's expectations of a [then] next-gen console shooter, but then so did *TimeSplitters 2* and *Medal of Honor*."

"I imagine when *Red Faction* was first launched for the PS2 and averaged about 50K units of sales per week for the first five months or so, that the PS2 folks felt pretty good about their platform having great shooters," smiles Randy Pitchford at Gearbox, who is currently working on *Brothers in Arms* for Ubisoft. "I also know that you can get *Half-Life for* PlayStation 2 and that you can't find it for the Xbox. The PS2 version turned out really well and was reviewed superhigh—with improved graphics, an exclusive cooperative game, and many other bells and whistles."

"To finally get ourselves a game worthy (or better) than *Halo 2*, game designers have to stop comparing everything to it," says Gaming Advisory Panel member Jonathan Weinstein. "Designers need to think in a more positive way to realize that they can, and will, make the greatest game out there, not constantly trying to live up to standards. It's not a question of technology; it's a question of ideas, of goals. They shouldn't be set high; they should be given no limits."

"FPS games are inherently technology-driven titles," argues Midway's chief marketing officer Steve Allison, who is currently working on building awareness for *Area 51*. "*Halo* showed that a badass FPS game was possible on a console because it showed that great gameplay, A.I., and multigenre gameplay with vehicles could be achieved in a console FPS. That said, no developer has been able to squeeze a really strong piece of FPS-oriented technology out of the PS2 yet."

**HALO IS WHERE ALL THE HEAT IS IN THIS GENRE.**

With that in mind, what's next for the genre? Have we seen everything that can be done, or do we need to wait for the next generation of technology? "Many people felt that after *Quake*, there was little room to expand the FPS genre," explains Guerrilla's Burns. "Then we got *Half-Life* and a game with an immersive story line! As technologies expand, as gamer expectation continues to grow and the genre matures further, game designers will have more and more options open to make compelling, immersive, and ultimately entertaining action games. As one of ours commented: If you can't think of anything more to do with FP shooters, you have no imagination."

"First-person games are the best way to feel like you're in the story," explains Gearbox's Pitchford. "In a first-person game like *Brothers in Arms*,

### GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

**PLAY AS A BAD GUY FOR A CHANGE**

**The original** is cited as one of the finest examples of the genre, so the stakes are high for Electronic Arts' new game, which exploits this name. The new development team is not afraid of mixing things up, which is something that both the *Bond* franchise and the shooter genre could certainly use.

Eschewing the usual suit/car/gadget trappings of a *Bond* game, *Rogue* casts you as a particularly nasty bad guy. You're an aspiring 00 agent who is soon dismissed from MI6 (by Dame Judi Dench, no less) for "reckless brutality." Quite what you did isn't clear yet, although we hear you may actually play the mission in question. After being fired, you're recruited by Auric Goldfinger in a war against Dr. No. An encounter with the bad doctor costs you an eye, but Goldfinger's technicians replace this with a synthetic one, which is (bet you didn't see this coming) gold colored. So nothing to do with the movie—or the first game—at all, then.

Still, expect a lot of dramatic scripted moments in outrageous locales designed by Academy Award–winning Sir Ken Adam, who is responsible for some of the most famous sets (think volcano lairs) in the *Bond* flicks.

In honor of its forebear, *Rogue* will be jampacked with not only a hefty single-player punch, but also with multiplayer options that include old-school deathmatch play and objective-based team wars. Much more elaborate than simple capture-the-flag games, these team matches could well be the most popular feature of *Rogue* when it's released at the end of the year.

**Pub.** EA Games **Dev.** EA LA **Release** December

### PARIAH

**ONE UNPLEASANT PENAL PLANET**

**Earth as Alcatraz.** That's the three-word backstory for Digital Extremes' latest opus. The co-creators of the original *Unreal* have set their latest effort on planet Earth in 2520, and our home is dubiously uglified. Drained of its natural resources, it's now a maximum-security prison for the universe's worst.

You fit into this as a military doctor in charge of transporting an infected (and eye-catching) female inmate off Earth. Everything's peachy until your ship gets clipped at liftoff and you're grounded in Mother Earth's penal crapstorm. Your goal is to survive and figure a way out.

We know that Digital Extremes can supply action, but *Pariah's* emphasis on story is the biggest selling point. "We've researched the art of storytelling quite a bit," says James Schmalz, founder and creative director of Digital Extremes. "We enlisted two Hollywood scriptwriters to make sure we had a compelling character-driven script. In the game mechanic, we have purposely designed situations within the game to cater to the growth of the story."

Working with the guys at Pseudo Interactive (who are handling the conversion to PS2 and making it look as good as this Xbox screen), the *Pariah* team is using an extensively modified version of the *Unreal* engine to make it look snazzy. At press time, the game was still pending concept approval from Sony, but considering Digital Extremes' pedigree, we don't see that taking too long. As for the title, "Basically, it describes all the characters in the game," explains Schmalz. "They are all, in one way or another, pariahs."

**Pub.** Groove Games **Dev.** Digital Ext. **Release** Q1 2005

### CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

**COLLECT CALL FROM A MR. DUTY. WILL YOU ACCEPT THE CHARGES?**

**Yeah, we know,** World War II is played out. Get over it. There's still plenty of untapped potential in this conflict. Take, for example, *Finest Hour*, a from-the-ground-up restructuring of the wildly successful PC shooter. Yes, it's historically accurate, based on real-life locations that were the focus of real-life battles, got a rousing score and a moving cinematic presentation—these are all pretty much par for the course for WWII shooters. How *Finest Hour* differs is through perspective.

Well, perspectives: six of them, to be precise. Throughout the game, your viewpoint will shift between six different characters representing the three major Allied forces: the Americans, the British, and the Russians. While jumping between the characters, you'll also move through the major European areas of operation of WWII. You'll travel with the Americans as they push into Europe from the coast of France; you'll trudge through the desert with the Brits as part of the Desert Rats, and you'll attack the Germans from the east with your Russian comrades. You'll play as snipers, commandos, tank commanders, and common soldiers. Rather than play as one soldier, you're seeing the push against the Germans from all Allies. This multilateral approach should offer a broader, more holistic view of the war; you'll see that it wasn't all Omaha Beach and Pearl Harbor.

Will we hit a point when we can no longer distinguish between WWII shooters? Yeah, probably. But judging from what we've seen of *Finest Hour* so far, that time has not yet come.

**Pub.** Activision **Dev.** Spark **Release** Fall

you are the character—you live the life of a 101st Airborne paratrooper for the D-Day invasion. You see what he sees from his eyes. You jump into combat, lead your squad, and make decisions between the success of your mission and your own life and the lives of your men."

"FPS games have yet to see their biggest innovations, even on PC," Midway's Allison explains. "Frankly, the next generation of consoles is actually going to leapfrog PCs in terms of the power available to games. The power that will be available to developers on the next generation of consoles will allow incredible technology innovations that will probably affect FPS games sooner than any other genre. Artificial intelligence will get better, and let's face it, most FPS games are shooting galleries, really. Only rarely do the targets we shoot at appear remotely intelligent and [are] really fun to be in combat with. Online will get better, too, and the next gen of systems will be primed for large-scale multiplayer games online. That's something barely doable on today's consoles."

Paul O'Connor, the lead designer on *Darkwatch* at Sammy Studios, explains, "The genre is going toward more variety and for larger experiences, both in terms of story and interaction. We're not limited by point of view—we'll use third person where appropriate. The key ingredient to a shooter is high-paced shooting action, but growing the genre will require new innovations, as well as borrowing from other game genres."

Steve Sinclair, the lead programmer on *Pariah* at Digital Extremes, agrees. "The genre is going toward stories and experience," he says. "That's good and bad. Focusing on the experience is great—*Doom 3* didn't try to build a rounder wheel with the gameplay, but the experience and the execution made it solid. We'll be continuing to mix in other genres and see what happens. The budgets will get so huge that the games will be getting shorter and [will] dodge risks like innovation. There's a lot more to be done, but it will take a back seat to the graphics arms race for a while."

**"THE KEY INGREDIENT TO A SHOOTER IS HIGH-PACED ACTION."**

Is *Doom 3* the current benchmark? Will it change the genre? "To be frank with you? I don't think so," says Ubisoft's Daniel Roy, who is currently working as the associate producer on *Ghost Recon 2* at Ubisoft Shanghai. "*Doom 3* is a very impressive technological accomplishment and a fun, terribly atmospheric

## DARKWATCH
### LIKE HALLOWEEN WITH COWBOYS

***Darkwatch* easily** takes the cake when it comes to first-person-shooter premises. Sure, vampires and cowboys individually aren't unique character types for videogames, but they are when you combine the two to form a whole different kettle of fish known as the vampire cowboy. On top of being created from two of the most badass things in the universe, you get to ride a vampiric horse. Now, does this horse stay alive by feeding on the blood of other creatures? Does it bite the necks of other horses? Does it have a cool vampire cape? Also, can it turn into some kind of horse-bat?

All kidding aside, *Darkwatch* looks like it'll have some impressive features to help it compete with the big boys of first-person shooters. Naturally, the main character (Jericho) has a suite of vampire powers at his disposal, including supersight and superspeed, which can be enhanced over the course of the game. Jericho also makes key decisions during the game that ultimately affect the way other characters react to his presence, so there are some RPG elements as well.

Of course, there's plenty of raw action in *Darkwatch.* Jericho plows through countless zombies and other fiendish creatures while traveling through a variety of familiar Old West environments, which also have cool things like destructible objects. If you can't live without multiplayer options, *Darkwatch* will have those as well, although specifics have yet to be released. We can only hope there will be some tumbleweeds thrown in there, too, because it can't be a Western if there aren't tumbleweeds.

**Pub.** Sammy Studios **Dev.** Sammy **Release** Q1 2005

## GHOST RECON 2
### A LESSON IN TEAMWORK

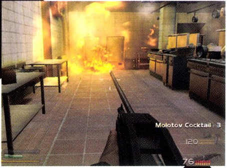
**The year is 2007.** A cruise missile is launched from North Korea against a U.S. warship in the Korea Strait. The U.S. sends troops into South Korea to defend Seoul. But U.S. intelligence suspects things are more complex than they appear. In order to gather intelligence, Sam Fisher is sent into North Korea to investigate the situation.

Wait, what? Sam Fisher? Isn't this a *Ghost Recon 2* preview? Why yes, it is. But in an unprecedented (though overdue) move, Ubisoft is overlapping the story lines of two different games in Tom Clancy's "Clancyverse" to allow players to see different sides of the same story. See, while Sam is sneaking around, the Ghosts are sent in to throw around more muscle.

This simultaneity isn't the only unique feature of *Ghost Recon 2.* Also interesting is the fact that the PS2 version is a completely different game from the Xbox version. How different? Well, it uses a different engine (the *Unreal* engine with Havok 2 physics), and it's set four years earlier—so basically, nothing except the basic controls will be the same. Furthermore, *Ghost Recon 2* features an over-the-shoulder viewpoint, mainly to allow for the introduction of hand signals to go along with the headset-based voice commands for directing your teammates.

Also new will be 16-person online play, with both competitive and cooperative modes. Taken in all at once, this news makes it look like this may be the first *Ghost Recon* that's not depressingly slow moving, and that's definitely cause for celebration.

**Pub.** Ubisoft **Dev.** Ubisoft Shanghai **Release** Q4 2004



## COLD WINTER
### HOT ACTION

**Imagine being** an unproven developer trying to release a first-person shooter with both single-player and online modes around the same time that *Killzone* and a certain game that starts with "H" and ends with "alo 2" are to come out. Chances are you're not going to get the attention you want, which is why Vivendi Universal pushed back *Cold Winter's* release to 2005.

It's a smart move. Not only will it give Swordfish Studios more time to put additional polish on the RenderWare-powered game, but it also guarantees that *Cold Winter* won't get lost in a sea of games of the same genre. That's not to say *Cold Winter* doesn't do anything to stand out. Famed comic book writer Warren Ellis, who you might remember from his "Hunter Thompson in the future" series *Transmetropolitan* (or the current run on *Ultimate Fantastic Four*), penned the story that involves MI6 agent Andrew Sterling arrested in China for spying. Thankfully, Sterling manages to escape and eventually joins a private security agency to punch terrorists in the breadbasket in six different locations around the world.

And since *Cold Winter* uses the latest version of the RenderWare engine, you can expect a nice-looking game with plenty of little touches that add to the atmosphere. Plus, there's some pretty good A.I. that tells enemies to take cover when under fire and move in tactical patterns, much like soldiers would use in real life. They'll keep you on your toes, so be sure to use everything to your advantage, including furniture that might be useful for cover in case you find yourself trapped in a firefight.

**Pub.** Vivendi **Dev.** Swordfish Studios **Release** Q1 2005

### WHAT IS THE GAMING ADVISORY PANEL?

You may have seen the folks from "the GAP" on our October DVD, or you may have seen their club page on 1UP.com at GAP-club.1UP.com. The Gaming Advisory Panel is a group selected from registered PS2 owners who are charged with checking out games and participating in research for SCEA. Neat gig, huh? If you want a chance at being selected, make sure you register for the PlayStation Underground at us.playstation.com.

game. However, I don't think it's brought a lot to the table in terms of gameplay innovation. It did what it did a lot better than the rest, but it didn't reinvent the genre in the ways *Halo* and *Half-Life* did. To be sure, we'll see a lot of the *Doom 3* engine in the future, and certainly a few *Doom 3* clones. But I don't think that, down the line, we will look at shooter games and say, 'This is designed the way it is because of *Doom 3*.'

"I remember videogame analysts in 1998 saying that the shooter genre could not evolve much further," Roy continues. "That was a few months before *Half-Life* came out and showed everybody a new way to create a gripping shooter. I think the shooter genre is to videogames what the action movie is to cinema. It's inherently versatile. Every once in a while, you think it's becoming formulaic, and then something comes out that inspires everyone to try new things. Next-generation shooters are just around the corner, and at the same time, games on current-generation consoles are still exploring new ground, such as realistic team-based gameplay or new settings. In 2004, I think the question is more, what *can't* be done in this genre?

"I think the next generation of technology will liberate the player more and more as time goes by," Roy says. "The environments will become more interactive, dynamic, and far-reaching. This is the part that you can't accomplish by merely upping the polygon count, so expect it to take some time. But the more technology advances, the more game designers become free to create deeply involving games that grip the players and never let go of their attention. Ultimately, technological advances in videogames are about freedom."

"Online will be much more of a concern from the outset of the next generation," explains Guerrilla's Burns, nicely helping us segue into the online portion of the discussion. "More energy will be channeled toward it from the very beginning," he says.

"Team support is the core," says Gaming Advisory Panel member Joe Larkin. "Plus, we need games to expand past the 16-player max. A war needs lots of players. Larger maps need more players involved, and this breeds more uncertainties that would make the game more exciting."

"For the current generation of platforms, online play is a value-added feature," states Sammy Studios' O'Connor. "For consoles, single player is still the most critical mode."

"How many 16-player FPS games exist on PS2 that are totally flawless, smooth, and kick-ass right now?" asks Midway's Allison. "We're five years into the hardware cycle, and the answer is 'none.' The next generation of hardware combined with increased penetration of home broadband connections will mean that this kind of thing will be expected by gamers, and as a result, dedicated passionate online communities will flourish. We'll see an evolution for

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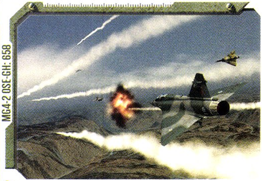

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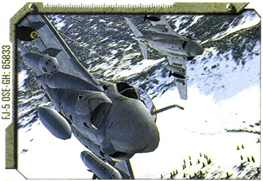

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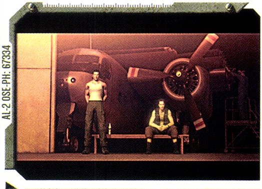

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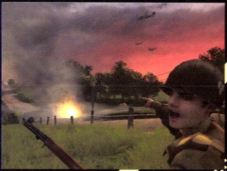

## AREA 51

### ALIENS ARE COMING TO GET YOU

**Some of you** may remember *Area 51* if you trip into a bad '90s arcade memory. Remember the light-gun shooter with the offensive orange guns? Well, thanks to smart people at Midway, the latest version of *Area 51* bears no resemblance to its predecessor, besides killing aliens.

This updated shooter is a graphical dream for PS2 owners starting to feel the system's age; it offers stellar prerendered cut-scenes and an engine that makes light work of the detailed indoor environments. The conspiratorial story line comes to life through the eyes of hazmat hero Ethan Cole, coolly voiced by David Duchovny. Cole ends up uncovering the secrets hidden deep within the walls of the famed facility, even coming face-to-face with little gray men (plus a "friendly" alien named Edgar, played by Marilyn Manson).

Once Cole discovers a nasty mutant virus that transforms humans into crazed destruction machines, *Area 51* chucks in a signature twist, lending out E.T-inspired superpowers to complement the hulking submachine guns and standard pistols so common to the genre. Now you have weird goodies such as a projectile laser weapon that fires a beam, which actually bounces off walls and around corners (buh-bye, campers!), and mutant parasitic heat-seeking bombs that wreak havoc on entire rooms.

As for multiplayer, Midway is promising serious 16-player carnage; note that ex-Id Software superheroes John Romero and Tom Hall are even building custom levels. Obviously, Midway is serious about *Area 51* being a contender in the FPS arena.

**Pub.** Midway **Dev.** Inevitable **Release** Q1 2005

## PROJECT: SNOWBLIND

### CYBERNETIC BIOMOD GOODIES AND ONLINE FRAGFESTS

**Starting life** as the much rumored *"Deus Ex*-based shooter," *Project: Snowblind* has been through a number of name changes over the course of its life (at one point being called *Deus Ex Clan War*).

The game is set in 2065, and you start as 2nd Lt. Nathan Frost, a soldier described as a regular grunt who volunteers to be turned into a genetically enhanced, cyber-augmented supersoldier from the future. The game begins with Frost stranded behind enemy lines and cut off from command, with only a handful of men to support him. His duty, it would seem, is to continue with his mission and stop a renegade militia hell-bent on detonating EMP weapons.

*Project: Snowblind*'s *Deus Ex*-based history is somewhat apparent in the augmentations that the hero can apply to his system. Combat is of the "lots of people running around so that you feel like you're in a full on war" variety, with lots of dramatic scripted moments featuring hordes of bad guys and gigantic guns spitting armor-piercing death at anything that moves, along with a bunch of seriously cool experimental weapons such as rail guns and zappy things that swarm and such.

Online play is going to be big, with 16-player matches expected to be the norm. Although specifics haven't been revealed yet, we have seen deathmatch and capture-the-flag modes up and running already. The guys at Crystal Dynamics promise "new modes uniquely designed for the PS2," too, but they've not told us what they are yet. Perhaps next month.

**Pub.** Eidos **Dev.** Crystal Dynamics **Release** Winter

## BROTHERS IN ARMS

### THE WWII GENRE GETS A NEW PREPOSITION

**Hey look,** another World War II shooter! In the cutthroat WWII-FPS world, you gotta get a gimmick these days, and *Brothers in Arms* is no exception. Gearbox's (the Xbox/PC developer, with Ubisoft Shanghai handling the PS2 port) hook: realism and teamwork.

The game spans the eight days between D-Day and the fall of Carentan and puts you in the shoes of a paratrooper named Sgt. Matt Baker. Baker is the leader of a fictitious squad in Fox Company of the 502nd Parachute Infantry, a regiment in the 101st Airborne that fought in some of the most influential battles of WWII. So you'll be seeing pieces of every big battle.

More important, they're attempting to recreate the feeling of brotherhood under fire by developing advanced computer-controlled teammates and putting them through some seriously harrowing events to help you get a taste of what WWII was really like. You'll control your squad through a simple tactical interface, and you should expect more than just "go here" or "shoot that"—the tactics are expected to be more advanced than other shooters' (what little Gearbox has revealed about multiplayer indicates that it will have more in common with, say, *StarCraft* than with *Medal of Honor*).

How accurate is Gearbox's vision of The Big One? Accurate enough to prompt the Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation to endorse it, saying, "The VFW Foundation believes that *Brothers in Arms* will help us reach our goal of increasing awareness about the sacrifices of veterans." You know you've got something special when the VFW gets behind it.

**Pub.** Ubisoft **Dev.** Gearbox **Release** Q1 2005

### WHO WE TALKED TO?

**Morgan Gray**, lead designer, *Project: Snowblind* at Crystal Dynamics
**Alastair Burns**, producer, *Killzone* at Guerrilla Games
**Randy Pitchford**, president, Gearbox
**Steve Allison**, chief marketing officer, Midway
**Paul O'Connor**, lead designer, *Darkwatch* at Sammy Studios
**Steve Sinclair**, lead programmer, *Pariah* at Digital Extremes
**Daniel Roy**, associate producer, *Ghost Recon 2* at Ubisoft Shanghai
GAP member, **Jonathan Weinstein**
GAP member, **Joe Larkin**
GAP member, **Nick Coenen**
GAP member, **Jonathan Hunt**

FPS games, in particular where the online player will have a very happy home. Right now, he has some good and some bad when compared to the experiences available on PC."

"Obviously, there has been a trend toward more team-oriented gameplay lately," states Crystal Dynamics' Gray. "Gone are the days of simple deathmatch. The gaming market has spoken, and they want team-based/objective-based gameplay. This is going to expand into larger gaming worlds, with more simultaneous players. Recently, the inclusion of vehicles into the mix has been met with success. I'd expect this to continue. I don't see the next big thing coming from left field—the next evolution of online shooters will just be a game that does everything everyone else is doing, but does all of it right."

> **"SIMPLE CTF AND DEATHMATCH DON'T CUT IT ANYMORE."**

GAP member Nick Coenen concurs. "More modes of play are needed," he says. "Simple capture the flag and deathmatch don't cut it anymore. When you go to play paintball, there are literally dozens of game types, and we should have that freedom in games."

"*Pandora Tomorrow* is a good example of this evolution," says Digital Extremes' Sinclair. "However, it's still far too intimidating to play these games online for many people." Why? "The existing player base tends to be very hostile and impatient. The incentive for mentoring just doesn't exist in short-session games as it does in massively multiplayer online games. Some bits of lightweight persistence help keep people honest; *America's Army* has some great features of this sort."

Jonathan Hunt from the Gaming Advisory Panel cites *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*, too. "Team cooperation has to be a big part of the future," he says. "*Splinter Cell*'s 'need more than one to get something done' rule illustrates this. Each team member will have an integral role in accomplishing a goal that can be accomplished only through teamwork."

Currently, it would seem that if any game is set up to be PS2's answer to *Halo*, it's Guerrilla's *Killzone*, so we give the final word on the subject of the future of shooters to Burns. "It would seem that the next generation of shooters will allow us to simply expand on what we already have in games," he smiles. "More of the same, but bigger and better." «

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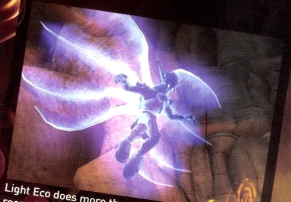

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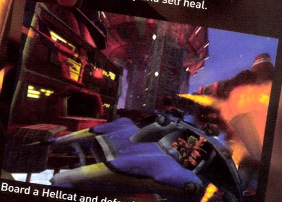

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One year ago, Jak and Daxter put their butts on the line to save Haven City from Kor and his Metal Heads. But the chaos rages on. Warring factions continue to battle. The city—even its palace—lies in shambles. And everyone blames the one guy in town with Dark Eco power. How's that for gratitude?

*Jak 3* faces our pointy-eared hero with his greatest adventure yet. Now banished to the Wasteland—an aptly named place of exile if there ever was one—Jak begins his quest for redemption joined by pals Daxter and Pecker. Their objective: escape from an area *five times* the size of Haven City.

Needless to say, it won't be easy. A cavernous mine, a vicious volcano, the hostile city of Spargus and other hazardous environments compose the Wasteland, where many inhabitants would sooner eat off Jak's hand than shake it. Luckily, several forms of off-road transportation—from lizardback riding to hovercrafts to decked-out assault vehicles—exist to help speed things along.

And just as Jak fights to return to civilization, he also wages a very personal war—the one within himself. Now possessing Light Eco power in addition to the Dark Eco abilities that led to his banishment, Jak's struggle to balance the two adds further intrigue to the compelling story you'd expect of a *Jak* title (as seen in more than an hour's worth of cinematic cutscenes).

*Jak 3* concludes Naughty Dog's acclaimed *Jak* trilogy. Loyalties will be tested. A climactic battle will be fought. Shocking secrets will be revealed. And hey...you even get to play as Daxter. This is the one you've been waiting for.

TEEN
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Comic Mischief
Language
Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

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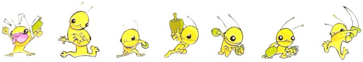

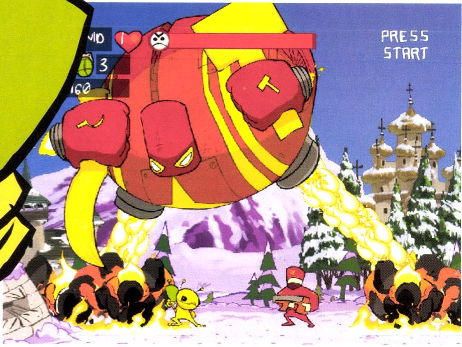

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HOMINID 2
310

# ALIEN HOMINID

## INDEPENDENT, SELF-FUNDED, STYLISH AWESOMENESS

**THE "PROTOTYPE"**
You can find the original version of *Alien Hominid* at www.newgrounds.com. Designed in 2002, the art style and basic gameplay are quite similar to what you'll see on the PS2 in November, but the majority of the levels are quite different.

**»** ***Alien Hominid*** **represents everything that is good** about the game industry. Spawned from a free online Flash game, its distinctive style and hardcore *Contra* and *Metal Slug*–inspired gameplay eschew everything that you have read about the way the business is evolving. It's not a multimillion-dollar project, and it wasn't created by a staff of hundreds beavering away on some kind of manufactured intellectual property. *Alien Hominid* is a labor of love, a throwback to the good old days of game development, and in its Web-based form, it proved so popular that its creators formed a brand-new team called The Behemoth to re-create the experience for consoles.

The team describes itself as "a small group of veteran developers who self-fund their work and take orders from no one." The group gathered the funds to build the game from scratch and signed a deal with O~3 Entertainment (headed up by Bill Gardner, previously the top man at Capcom USA), a very admirable new publisher that is focused on working with independent development studios. "We were immediately attracted to this game after seeing the prototype on the Web," comments Gardner. "There's a good reason why this game has over 6 million downloads—it's truly original and addictive."

So what's it like? If you're a fan of old-school 2D shooters, you're going to love it. And when we say love it, we mean you're going to wet yourself with hardcore, message-board-posting glee. Although boasting modern-looking visuals that provoke comparisons to *Viewtiful Joe*, its basic structure is pure *Contra*. The action scrolls from left to right, there's a perpetual onslaught of bad guys, and that's pretty much it. It's dressed up in an "alien crash-lands on Earth" story line, but the real draw here is the old-school gameplay, a retro-style arcade challenge that will truly kick your ass. You'll face 16 emasculating levels (we struggled at first just to get past *level two*) and a whole bunch of minigames, all filled with psychotic enemies, insane minibosses, and gigantic bosses that you can attack with an assortment of guns and explosives. Just like the games that inspired it, it also offers a cool two-player cooperative mode that allows you to jump in whenever you want, and it throws an assortment of vehicles for you to frolic in, too, just for good measure. The team says of the project, "We want what you want. We grew up loving games like *Contra*, *Gunstar Heroes*, and *Metal Slug*. We like our explosions big, and our bosses bigger. We think it's cool to drive bulldozers through buildings and ramp snowmobiles onto unsuspecting Soviet soldiers, so we work late hours to give you all that." Bravo to that. «

**Pub.** O~3 Entertainment **Dev.** The Behemoth **Release** November

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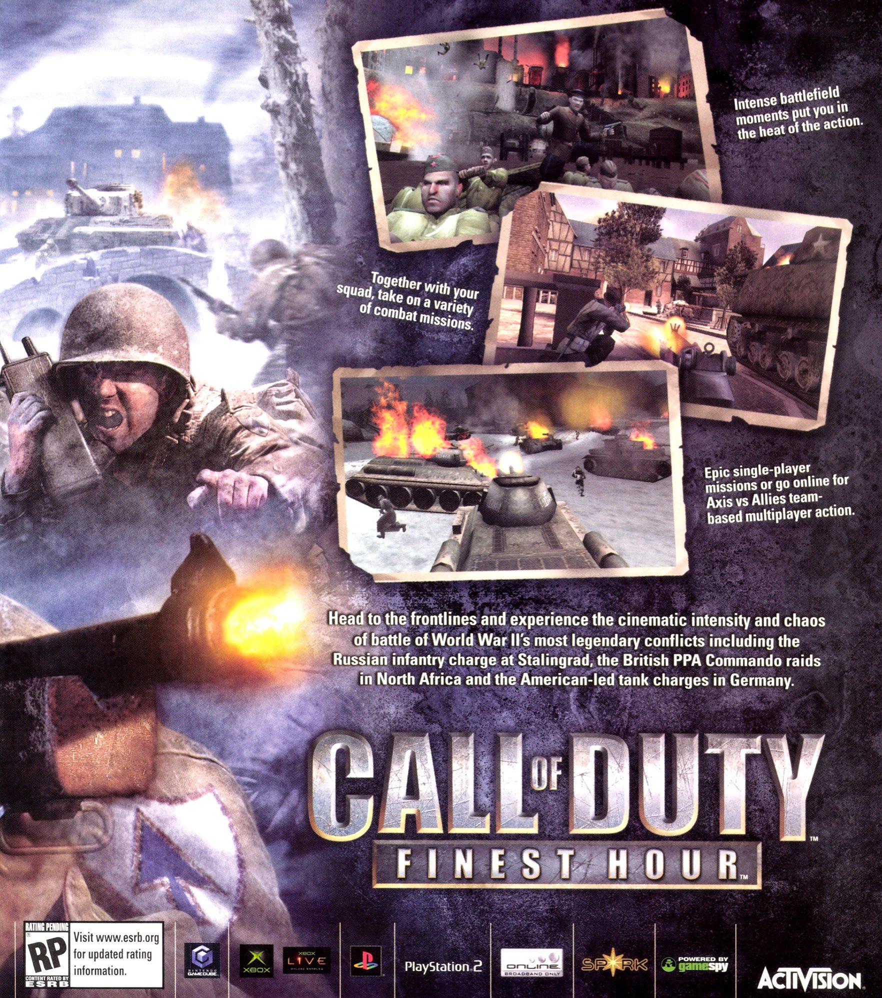
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# THE VIDEOGAME VOTE

## EDUCATE YOURSELF, AND BE READY FOR NOVEMBER

**There's good news and bad news** about videogames in this November's election. The good news is that videogames—and the various controversies surrounding them, from the level of violence in games to the sale of M-rated games to minors—are so far below the election radar that it's the rare national politician who makes games a data point on his election platform. The bad news is that this just makes it easier for games to surface as an issue later—mostly because it's often difficult to know where an elected official stands. When it comes to videogames, there is none of this red state versus blue state nonsense; neither Democrats nor Republicans "own" this issue. As a matter of policy, videogames are a wild card, and will continue to be so.

The best way to illustrate both the good news and the bad news is to highlight the most recent federal attempt to regulate videogames: House Resolution 669, the Protect Children from Video Game Sex and Violence Act of 2003, introduced by Representative Joe Baca (D-CA), a "blue dog" (conservative) Democrat. The bill, introduced in early 2003, would impose penalties, including fines ranging from $1,000 to $5,000, on those who sell graphically violent or sexual games to teens and other minors. H.R. 669 picked up 43 cosponsors in the House, from both sides of the political aisle, with the largest number of cosigners coming from some of the most tech-savvy states in the union: Texas, California, Washington, and Virginia.

**WHEN IT COMES TO VIDEOGAMES, THERE IS NONE OF THIS RED STATE VERSUS BLUE STATE NONSENSE.**

What happened to H.R. 669? Well, it got stuck in committee in March of 2003 and hasn't seen the light of day since—and Baca's office acknowledges that the bill is pretty much dead in the water. "It most likely will not reach the floor before the end of this session," says Baca representative Joanne Peters. "The congressman will make a decision when the session adjourns as to whether or not he will reintroduce it." It's worth noting that H.R. 669 is itself a reheat of H.R. 4645, introduced (and consequently killed) in the previous congressional session.

The rather ignominious fate of H.R. 669 is indicative of the apparent general feeling about videogame issues in Washington: It's a good enough issue to make some noise about while Congress is in session, but come election time, games slip off the radar. Carl Forti, communications director for the National Republican Congressional Committee, which works to get Republican candidates elected to Congress, notes that videogame issues, such as videogame violence, aren't major topics in the races the NRCC is tracking. "I think violence and crime in general are a concern for voters," he says. "Specifically about videogame violence, it's really hard to say. In the races we're focused on, we look at district-specific issues."

There's also the matter that the 2004 election is not lacking in other issues. "My sense is that if you look at the U.S. today, there's the war, education, poverty levels, all those core issues," says Jason Della Rocca, program director for the International Game Developers Association. "As significant as games are in many respects, we're not up there. And it should be that way. It'd be embarrassing if there were all these serious issues and everyone wanted to squabble about videogames."

Go to the election sites of the cosigners of H.R. 669 and you're hard-pressed to find a mention of games anywhere. Cosigner Jim Matheson (D-Utah) lists education, the economy, and national security as key issues; John Sweeney (R-NY) lists agriculture, banking, and defense. And while Joe Baca's videogame legislation is the centerpiece of his House website (although not his campaign site, which was still under construction as of this writing), his campaign is likely to focus on other areas, like immigration, which flared up as an issue thanks to Baca's criticism of immigration sweeps performed by Border Patrol agents in California.

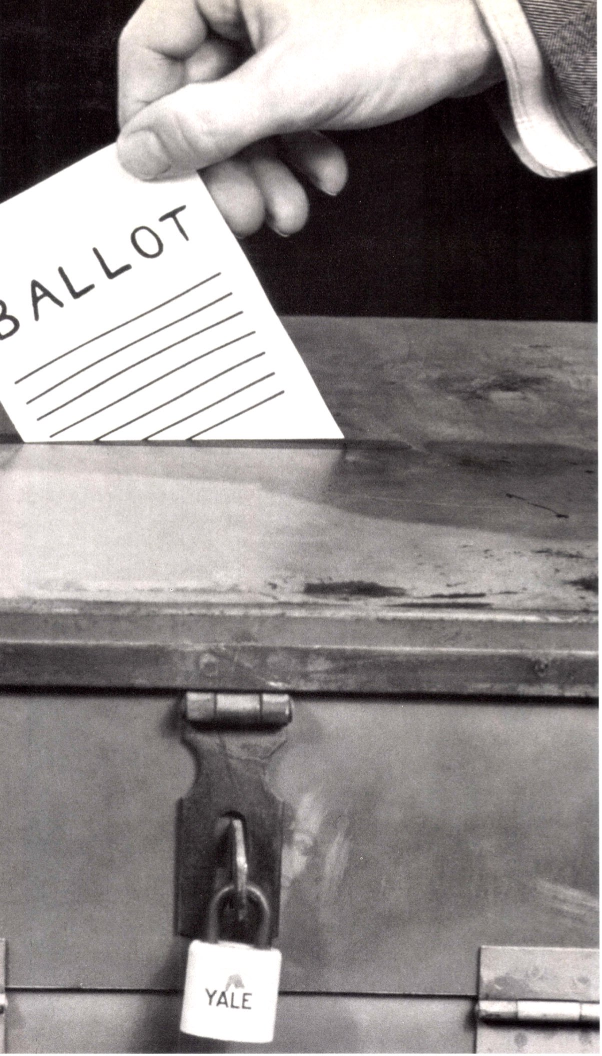
Videogame enthusiasts might breathe a sigh of relief that their favorite recreation is not in the crosshairs this election cycle. But that's not necessarily a good thing for gamers. If a candidate is not making a big deal about videogames in his campaign, it doesn't mean he doesn't have an opinion on them, it's just that you won't easily be able to find out what it is until Congress reconvenes and someone proposes videogame-related legislation.

And you can bet someone will. Videogame legislation, particularly regarding violence in videogames, "belongs to a class of legislation which is media friendly and gives politicians an issue that no one gets on the other side of," notes Ren Bucholz, activism coordinator for the Electronic Frontier Foundation. "Who wants to be for kids playing violent videogames?" Whether or not such bills ever make it out of committee is almost beside the point; there's perceived electorate goodwill generated simply by signing on.

An interesting question on that score, however, is: For how much longer? Despite the legislative attention given to children playing videogames, the average videogame player in the United States is in his late 20s. As today's teenage gamers pass into voting age, an increasing number of voters are likely to be videogame players. Voters who game, and who are familiar with the technology, may be less willing to support candidates who don't make clear their positions on videogames and other technology issues.

"People are only going to get more literate on these issues," says Bucholz. "The public is more savvy about how tech can be used. They're already more savvy than most legislators and judges. As they become more savvy, they'll be less likely to stand for incursions into their rights that policymakers will want to make. These formerly rarified issues have been made more clear; it's your coworkers and your little brother who are involved in these issues."

Time may eventually solve videogaming's legislative problems. But in the meantime, the best way for gaming voters to know their national, state, and local candidates' positions on videogames is to use the good old-fashioned remedy: Ask. « *John Scalzi*



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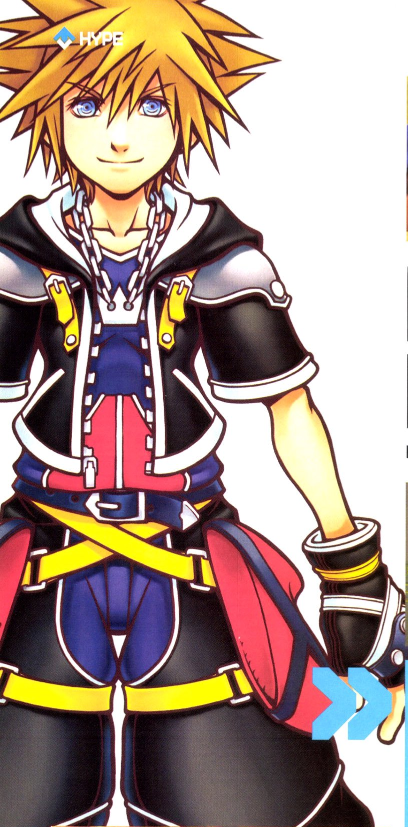
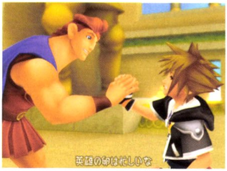
# KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES

## THE RELEVANT REPS

**Since representatives** all serve two-year terms, all of the cosponsors of House Resolution 669 are up for reelection in November. Here's the complete list, sorted by state, with party affiliation, district, and the date the representative signed on in support of the resolution.

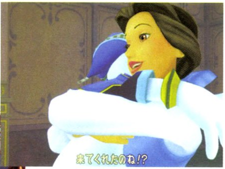
| Co-Sponsor | District | Date Signed | Party |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rep. Cramer, Robert E. (Bud), Jr. | [AL-5] | 5/22/2003 | D |
| Rep. Berry, Marion | [AR-1] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Grijalva, Raul M. | [AZ-7] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Pastor, Ed | [AZ-4] | 3/12/2003 | D |
| Rep. Baca, Joe | [CA-43] | Sponsor | D |
| Rep. Cardoza, Dennis A. | [CA-18] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Gallegly, Elton | [CA-24] | 5/22/2003 | R |
| Rep. Napolitano, Grace F. | [CA-38] | 2/25/2003 | D |
| Rep. Nunes, Devin | [CA-21] | 6/5/2003 | R |
| Rep. McInnis, Scott | [CO-3] | 2/25/2003 | R |
| Rep. Bordallo, Madeleine Z. | [GU] | 2/25/2003 | n/a |
| Rep. Shimkus, John | [IL-19] | 4/9/2003 | R |
| Rep. Hill, Baron P. | [IN-9] | 5/22/2003 | D |
| Rep. Souder, Mark E. | [IN-3] | 3/16/2004 | R |
| Rep. Moore, Dennis | [KS-3] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Lucas, Ken | [KY-4] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Lynch, Stephen F. | [MA-9] | 2/25/2003 | D |
| Rep. Van Hollen, Chris | [MD-8] | 3/19/2003 | D |
| Rep. McIntyre, Mike | [NC-7] | 5/22/2003 | D |
| Rep. Price, David E. | [NC-4] | 2/25/2003 | D |
| Rep. Pomeroy, Earl | [ND] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Osborne, Tom | [NE-3] | 2/25/2003 | R |
| Rep. Menendez, Robert | [NJ-13] | 2/25/2003 | D |
| Rep. Sweeney, John E. | [NY-20] | 4/9/2003 | R |
| Rep. Murtha, John P. | [PA-12] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Acevedo-Vila, Anibal | [PR] | 2/25/2003 | n/a |
| Rep. Spratt, John M., Jr. | [SC-5] | 2/25/2003 | D |
| Rep. Ford, Harold E., Jr. | [TN-9] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Edwards, Chet | [TX-11] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Bell, Chris | [TX-25] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Green, Gene | [TX-29] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Hall, Ralph M. | [TX-4] | 5/20/2003 | R |
| Rep. Ortiz, Solomon P. | [TX-27] | 2/25/2003 | D |
| Rep. Reyes, Silvestre | [TX-16] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Stenholm, Charles W. | [TX-17] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Turner, Jim | [TX-2] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Matheson, Jim | [UT-2] | 2/25/2003 | D |
| Rep. Moran, James P. | [VA-8] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Wolf, Frank R. | [VA-10] | 5/14/2003 | R |
| Rep. Baird, Brian | [WA-3] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. Dicks, Norman D. | [WA-6] | 5/22/2003 | D |
| Rep. Larsen, Rick | [WA-2] | 5/20/2003 | D |
| Rep. McDermott, Jim | [WA-7] | 2/25/2003 | D |
| Rep. Kind, Ron | [WI-3] | 5/20/2003 | D |

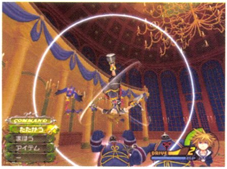


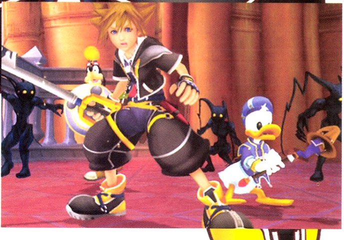


# KINGDOM HEARTS II

## MORE SORA, MORE DISNEY, LESS AGGRAVATION







**One of few true pleasures** in life is listening to a Japanese Donald Duck. The Japanese version of *Kingdom Hearts* has given us a great bounty of Donald's unique speech style in an utterly foreign language, and we just got another blast of Japanese Donald from a recent hands-on demo with the sequel.

*KH2* maintains the previous game's action-RPG design and has added some welcome tweaks. The camera is now controlled on the right analog stick instead of the shoulder buttons, and there are two attack buttons that allow for new and more interesting combo attacks. Sora not only has a new (but still Nomura-ed up) look, but he also has a new ability: absorbing his party members (at the moment, it's called "Trinity Attack," but that name is, of course, subject to change). Sora can actually absorb one of his party members to gain new abilities and traits. The demo example was a morph with Goofy; while Sora does a fair job of brandishing one keyblade, his morph into Sora-Goofy translates into dual-keyblade action (which actually looks cool, despite the absurd-sounding premise). Goofy remains absorbed inside Sora until the morph meter runs out. Meanwhile, Donald is still fighting on his own and yapping it up in Japanese.

Content-wise, Squenix is keeping much of the game under wraps, but we did get to check out the Underworld beneath the Coliseum in Olympus (from *Hercules*), and instead of some random castle like in the previous game, Sora actually goes to the Beast's castle (from *Beauty and the Beast*). In his castle, Beast is still protective of his famed rose-in-a-glass, but his castle is curiously bereft of servants (instead, it's filled with Heartless)—until you go to the basement and battle a massive Heartless demon who's locked up all the fine china and other servants of Beast. In the Underworld, Hades (voiced by someone who must be the Japanese version of James Woods) and his henchman Peg-Leg Pete conjure Auron (sans cool sunglasses and signature sake jug, since *KH* is a children's franchise), only to see Auron join up with Sora instead. In response, Hades sends Cerberus after you (cueing another boss battle with Cerberus, which is now easier thanks to the improved camera and attack options).

We've only seen two levels, but *Kingdom Hearts II* has plenty of time to grow (Squenix is positioning it after *FFXII* and even *Dragon Warrior VIII*!). Here's hoping that Squenix can perhaps craft a *Lion King*–inspired level, or let characters like Lulu join Sora next year. «

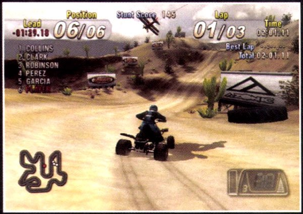
**Pub.** Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **Release** 2005

Advertisement

ATV Offroad Fury 3
BLAZE YOUR OWN TRAIL™

Lead -00:11.34
Position 06/06
Stunt Score 0
Lap 01/03
Time 00:21.24
Best Lap --:--.--
Total 00:21.24
1 ADAMS
2 BENNETT
3 GONZALEZ
4 DAVIS
5 BAKER
6 PLAYER

Lead
Position 04/06
Stunt Score 0
Lap 01/03
Time 00:05.23
Best Lap
Total 00:05.23
1 RIVERA
2 ALLEN
3 PEREZ
4 PLAYER
5 GARCIA
6 CLARK
Scorpion
750


Lead -01:29.16
Position 06/06
Stunt Score 145
Lap 01/03
Time 02:01.11
Best Lap
Total 02:01.11
1 COLLINS
2 CLARK
3 ROBINSON
4 PEREZ
5 GARCIA
6 PLAYER

**THE COMPETITION IS FIERCE.** The finish line lies just up the mountain, and all six competitors have a legitimate shot as they cross the wide-open environment. As you guide your all-terrain vehicle onward and upward, the fog builds up and begins to cloud your vision. You don't care, though—victory looms closer by the second, and you can taste it. There it is! The finish line. If you can just execute this last jump effectively—maybe even bust out a trick just for style—the win is yours. But then...

*WHAM!*

Out of nowhere, you feel the jolt of another rider from behind. The result: a spectacular crash. Unfortunately, *you're* part of it. As your position resets, you watch someone else cross the finish line. Tough luck. You're not totally bummed, though. Actually, "awed" is more like it. "That was one *awesome* crash," you tell the other five players via your USB headset. "Let's play again."

It's all par for the course in *ATV Offroad Fury® 3*, the latest offering in Sony Computer Entertainment America's acclaimed racing series. Developer Climax has created more than 30 new free-roaming environments for this sequel, including terrain types as diverse as snow, dirt, mud, ice, water and grass. Impress your opponents by mastering all 34 freestyle tricks, or wow them with your customized vehicle and rider. If you're up for a break from hardcore racing, try one of the eight minigames, from King of the Hill and Tag to Soccer and Basketball.

ATV 3's offline play remains as strong as ever?but the game really shines online. Got a few buddies you play with regularly? Then join a clan. And don't forget to check the Scoreboard to see how it stacks up against all of the other ones. Of course, you can also view your own personal accomplishments there. After all, barring a few unforeseen collisions, you're bound to accomplish quite a bit.

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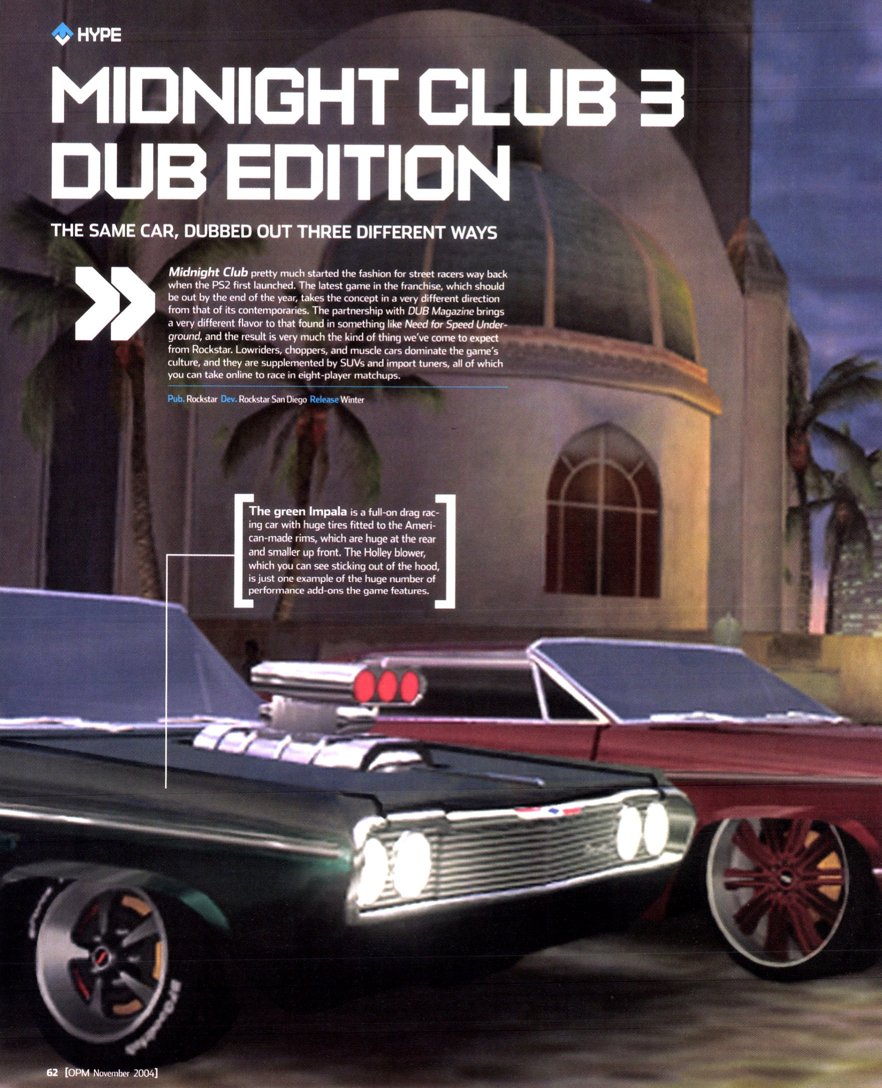
# MIDNIGHT CLUB 3 DUB EDITION

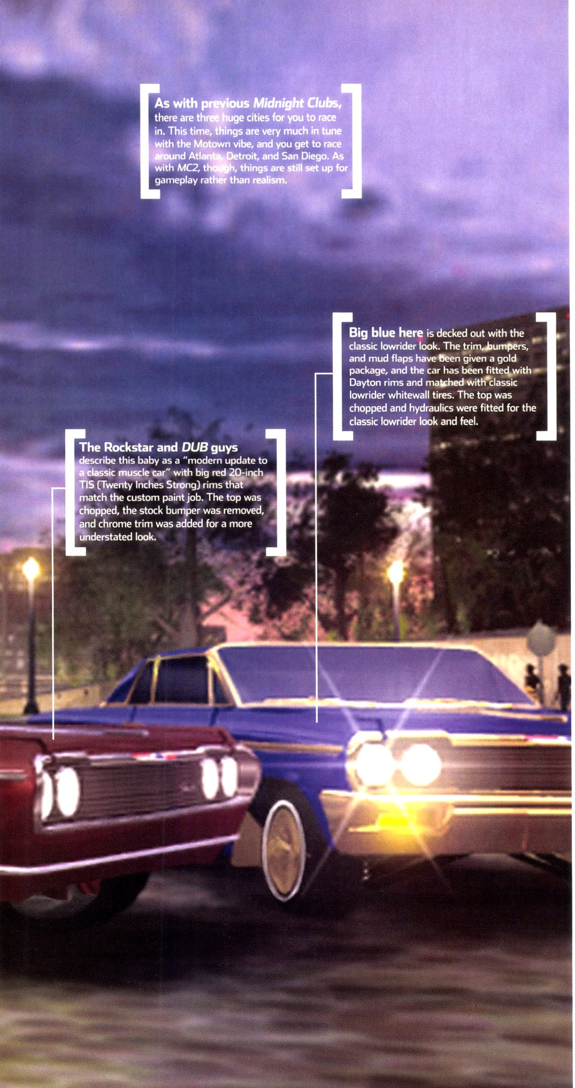
## THE SAME CAR, DUBBED OUT THREE DIFFERENT WAYS

***Midnight Club*** pretty much started the fashion for street racers way back when the PS2 first launched. The latest game in the franchise, which should be out by the end of the year, takes the concept in a very different direction from that of its contemporaries. The partnership with *DUB Magazine* brings a very different flavor to that found in something like *Need for Speed Underground*, and the result is very much the kind of thing we've come to expect from Rockstar. Lowriders, choppers, and muscle cars dominate the game's culture, and they are supplemented by SUVs and import tuners, all of which you can take online to race in eight-player matchups.

**Pub.** Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar San Diego **Release** Winter



**The green Impala** is a full-on drag racing car with huge tires fitted to the American-made rims, which are huge at the rear and smaller up front. The Holley blower, which you can see sticking out of the hood, is just one example of the huge number of performance add-ons the game features.



**As with previous *Midnight Clubs*,** there are three huge cities for you to race in. This time, things are very much in tune with the Motown vibe, and you get to race around Atlanta, Detroit, and San Diego. As with *MC2*, though, things are still set up for gameplay rather than realism.

**Big blue here** is decked out with the classic lowrider look. The trim, bumpers, and mud flaps have been given a gold package, and the car has been fitted with Dayton rims and matched with classic lowrider whitewall tires. The top was chopped and hydraulics were fitted for the classic lowrider look and feel.

**The Rockstar and *DUB* guys** describe this baby as a "modern update to a classic muscle car" with big red 20-inch TIS (Twenty Inches Strong) rims that match the custom paint job. The top was chopped, the stock bumper was removed, and chrome trim was added for a more understated look.

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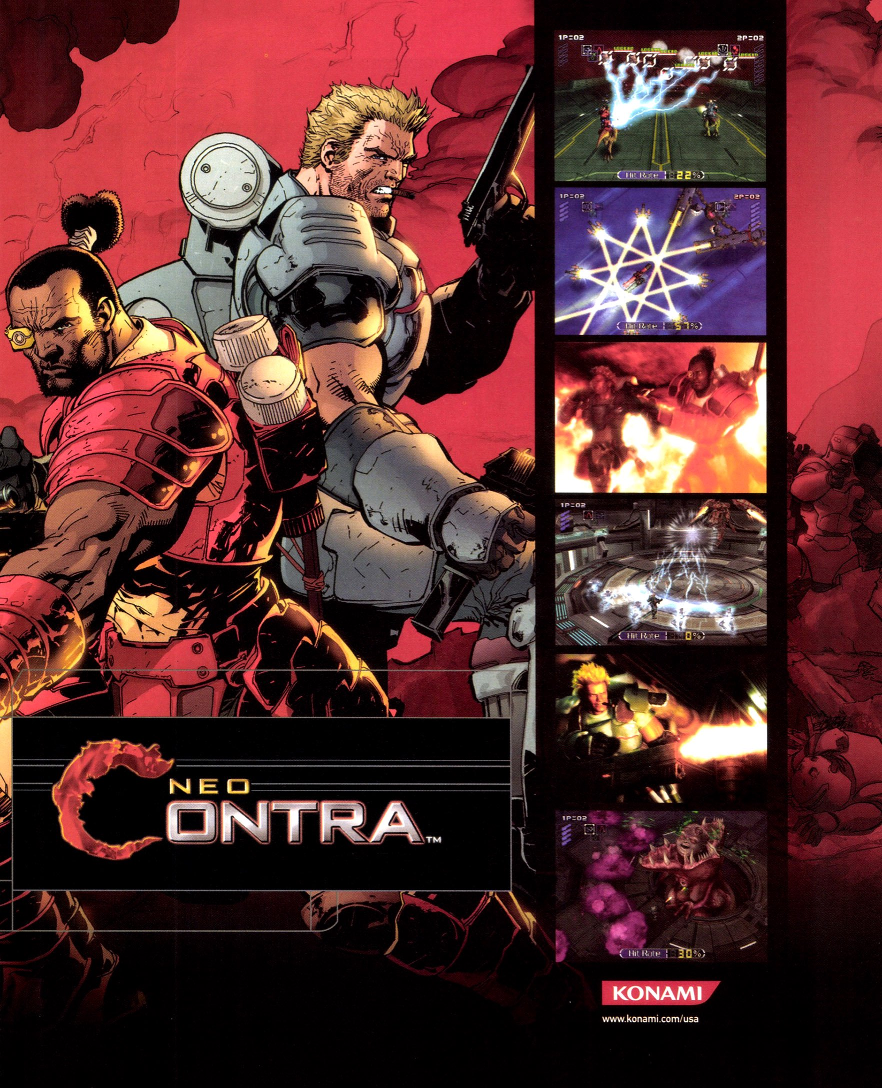
1P=02
2P=02
Hit Rate 22%
1P=02
2P=02
Hit Rate 57%
1P=02
Hit Rate 0%
1P=02
Hit Rate 30%

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# PAX OUT

## PENNY ARCADE KICKS OFF ITS OWN GAMING EXPO

**If you've ever been** to the San Diego Comic Con or Anime Expo and wondered why we—"we," of course, meaning gamers—don't have something like that, wonder no more. This August, the first Penny Arcade Expo (PAX), a public convention centered around gaming, was held, and judging by how well things went, it's not going to be the last.

Conceived and hosted by the creators of the online comic strip *Penny Arcade*, the show featured a variety of activities for attendees. There were tournaments open to anyone with the stones to sign up, panels featuring industry insiders on the state of the industry and how to get a gaming job, question-and-answer sessions with the *Penny Arcade* team, and an exhibition room that gave the general public a chance to play unreleased games in a sort of mini-E3. Though not many publishers took part in the exhibition—it was mainly Microsoft and Ubisoft games on display—more companies should be involved in next year's show.

### AN IMPOSSIBLY EXCITING *PONG* SHOWDOWN

There were two main highlights outside of the regular programming. The first was the concert on the first night. The entertainment included performances by "nerdcore" rappers Optimus Rhyme and MC Frontalot, pianist Conney Lin's medley of *Final Fantasy* themes, and a blazing performance by NES rockers the Minibosses that defies description. The second highlight was the Omegathon, an event that consisted of six minitournaments designed to whittle down a group of 20 randomly selected contestants until only two were left in an impossibly exciting *Pong* showdown.

Overall, there were just over 3,000 people in attendance, which exceeded the organizers' expectations by half. There are already plans for a 2005 show, which should be even bigger. So if you missed PAX 2004, keep an eye on www.penny-arcade.com for details. Maybe you'll see us there. «

# DATA STREAM

### TGS AHOY

The Tokyo Game Show was scheduled to start just as this issue of *OPM* went to press, and consequently we were unable to bring you coverage of the show this month. The show ran September 24-26, and extensive coverage can be found on www.1UP.com. Check for new PSP details along with previously unannounced games for both the new handheld (expected to ship before the end of the year in Japan) and the PS2. Notably absent from all of the preshow hype were any new details on *Final Fantasy XII* or the long-awaited *Dragon Quest VIII* from Square Enix.

### AH, VENICE

The Eternal City was recently the site of a film festival. Unique among the entries was Square Enix's *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children*. Attendees had the chance to look at a 25-minute cut of the CG movie based on events that transpire after the PS1 RPG. While *Advent Children* will be released for the PSP, it seems that the proprietary UMD format won't have a whole lot of additional room for the extras found in the DVD version of the film. *Advent Children* is scheduled for release in spring 2005.

# ZOE FLOWER

## WHAT COLOR IS YOUR CAMOUFLAGE?

**ZOE FLOWER** aka "Gamer Girl," creates TV programs and music videos, and looks good doing it. See the details at zoeflower.1UP.com.

**So I was hanging out at EA** with an art director friend of mine (Hi, Robo!) who told me about a fun little way to pass time with your gaming friends. He said, "If you were a game, what game would you be?" His friends nominated him to be *Beyond Good & Evil*, since he's likely to be overshadowed by the *GTA* types out there (you know, the loud obnoxious cool guys—you know who you are), but once you take a closer look, you find great depth and an enthralling overall experience. So this got me to thinking...what game would I be? I'm voting myself a hybrid: *Britney's Dance Beat* meets *Syphon Filter*. Feel free to add your two cents.

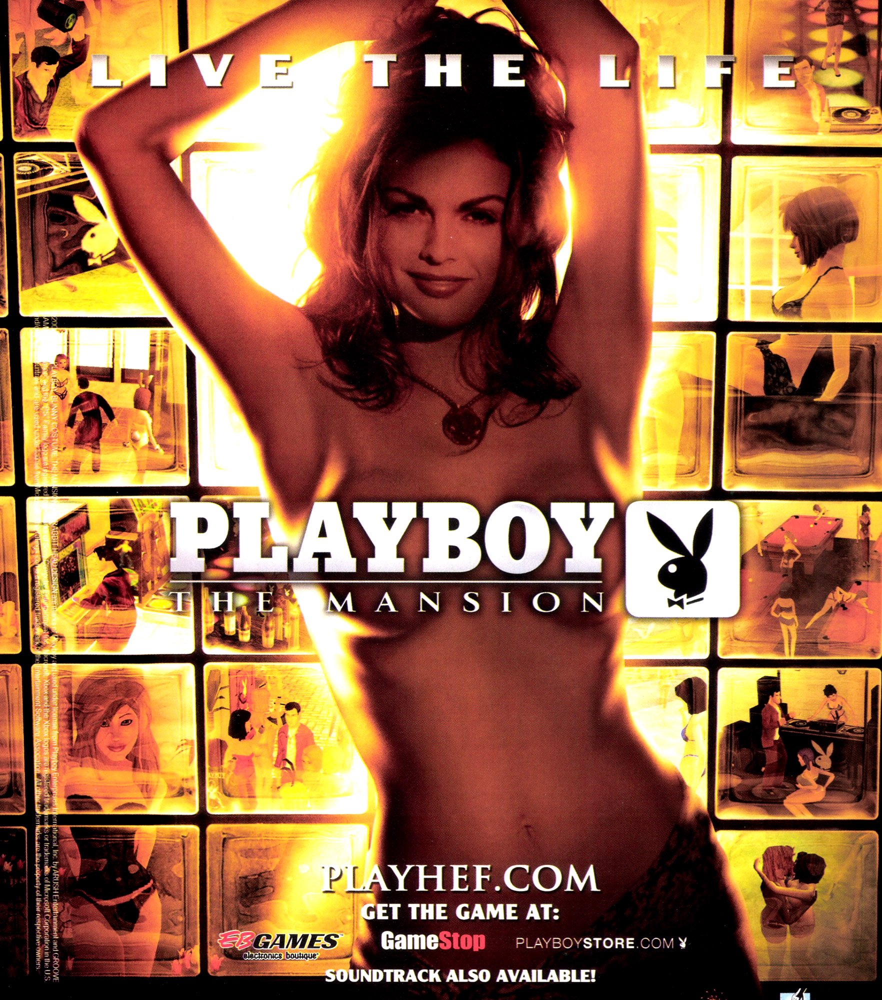
Fast-forward a month as I continue to consider the psychological meaning in what game I would represent. I'm chatting with a hot game designer with a penchant for vodka-cranberry beverages, and he gets philosophical on me, questioning whether the choices we make as we play a game reflect on our true personalities. Once I got over the shock that a designer (particularly this one) thinks about something other than cleavage physics and camera tweaking, I too began to wonder what my own choices mean. Why do I get such a joyous thrill out of chucking giant crates at innocent bystanders in *Psi-Ops*? And why can't I get enough of running over adorable sheep in *Katamari Damacy*? Does this mean that deep down I'm a bad person?

This week, with all these deep thoughts running rampant in my brain, I ran my own name through the *MGS* name generator. I was offended by the pathetic name tag I was slapped with, "Katana Centipede." And no, I didn't feel much better after running Hideo Kojima through to receive "Habitual Butterfly." At least that's pretty. I tried multiple versions of my name in the hopes of getting something a little more fearsome. No luck. So of course, I had to wonder why this made me so grumpy. And it was that moment I had the epiphany. We do in fact relate our own personality traits to the way we play games, and even to what games we enjoy.

### DOES THIS MEAN THAT DEEP DOWN I'M A BAD PERSON?

I'm not a behavior expert, and I can't tell you if my gaming lust for all-out destruction means I'm an outgoing person who likes to be in control or whether it just means I'm a plain old mean-spirited bully, but the fact that it does have meaning is what's important. Think about it. Some people like to go in guns a-blazing while others like to sneak by unnoticed in a cardboard box. Are you cautious or intrepid? Do you like hand-to-hand combat or sniping from a distance? These little choices most definitely reflect on deeper personality traits. If designers can tap into this psychology, we could potentially see a brave new breed of emotionally intriguing games.

Until then, I'm begrudgingly appraising my role of Katana Centipede and diving headfirst into *MGS3*. But as I do so, I'll be wondering what my gameplay decisions mean and if Kojima's inclusion of a camouflage index is in fact a small step toward considering the psychology of gameplay. That or he's just really into military fashions. And I need to see a therapist. «



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# 13 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT PSYCHONAUTS

## OR ITS CREATOR TIM SCHAFER

**MADMAN**
Tim Schafer doesn't trust you. And he's not sure if he likes you all that much either. But that's OK.

1 Tim Schafer is best known for his work on PC games that set the bar for the adventure genre. Some of them are *Grim Fandango, Full Throttle, LeChuck's Revenge: Monkey Island 2,* and *Day of the Tentacle.*

2 In the Game Critics Awards at 2002's E3, *Psychonauts* received the Best Original Game award.

3 *Psychonauts* was originally supposed to be an Xbox-only title, but it got cast adrift during a shake-up of suit-wearing Microsoft boss men. When Majesco picked up the publishing rights this summer, it expanded the platforms to include PlayStation 2 and PC. Suit-wearing boss men, PlayStation 2 owners everywhere salute you.

4 The plot of *Psychonauts* revolves around a circus boy named Raz who takes his dual talents in acrobatics and fortune-telling and runs off to join a life with psychic secret agents. Yes, we know what you're thinking: "Oh, not that same old story again!"

5 Schafer posts regular updates on the game at www.doublefine.com. A small sample: "I would say 'stay tuned,' but really what you should do is 'hold the f*** on,' because the coming avalanche of excellence will show no mercy and may very well sweep you off your feet into the Sea of Absolute, Numbing Satisfaction, where you will bob up and down on a life raft of...uh...a life raft of...gaming...pleasures?"

6 Raz's training will allow him to develop his powers of levitation, telekinesis, pyrokinesis, clairvoyance, teleportation, and invisibility. Oh, and he can enter people's minds by slapping a door on their forehead and opening it.

7 One of the bullies in *Psychonauts*, Bobby, is named after a bully who tormented Schafer in grade school.

8 Schafer came up with the basic premise of *Psychonauts* after reading Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams.*

9 Two words: meat circus.

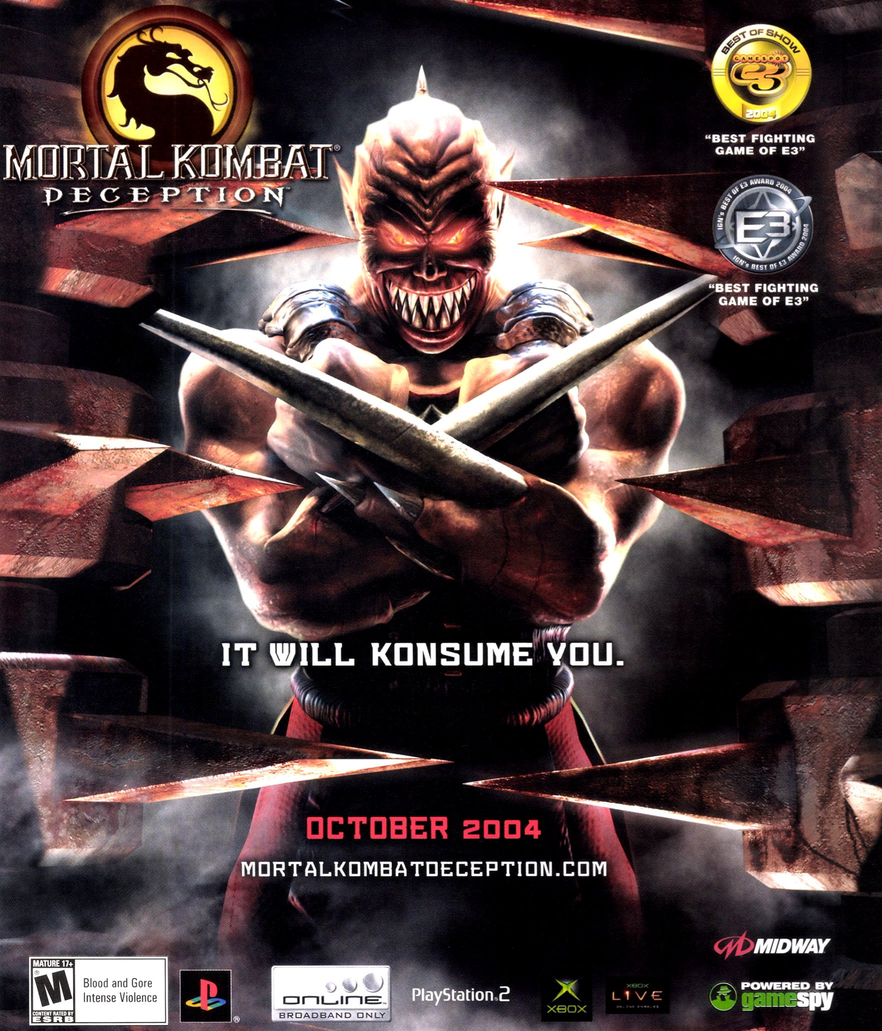
10 While at LucasArts, Schafer first presented them with a design document detailing six games he wanted to make. The first was *Full Throttle*, the second, *Grim Fandango*, and the third, *Psychonauts.* Three to go...

11 Schafer once bought a PaRappa the Rapper alarm clock, hoping that it was rhythm-based like the game. It wasn't, and he was very sad.

12 One of the brains that Raz infiltrates is a cube that rotates as he walks around it. When Schafer saw the spherical worlds in *Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando*, he knew people would accuse him of copying, but he would like it known that the ideas were developed independently from each other.

13 *Psychonauts*' new projected release date is the first half of 2005. «

Pub. Majesco Dev. Double Fine Productions Release Q2 2005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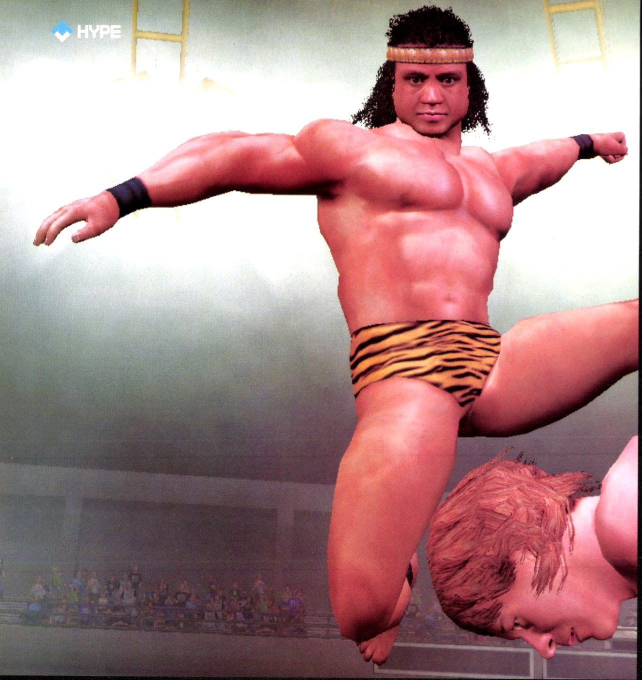

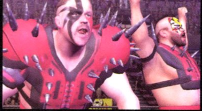

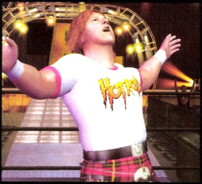

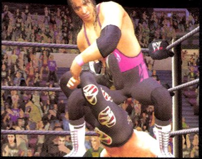

# WWE SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW

## LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE

**Everyone knows what to expect** from a new wrestling game these days. Oooh, there are some new characters. Ahhh, there's some kind of new option in the create-a-wrestler mode. Ohhh, that one guy's animation is a little different. In other words, you've seen it all before.

But you probably haven't seen or heard anything about *WWE SmackDown! vs. RAW*, the 2004 model of THQ's ongoing PS2 wrasslin' series. Well, open your ears first: This is the first wrestling game on record to actually feature the voices of the folks in the ring doing the wrestling. Yes, no longer will you have to bellow, "To be the man...you've got to beat the man!" at the top of your lungs whenever you whip your friend with Ric Flair—Ric will do it for you now. In fact, every wrestler in the game has voiceovers, with the exception of the "classic" wrestlers—including the undyingly popular Andre the Giant.

The firsts don't end there, however—*SmackDown! vs. RAW* is also the first wrestling game to have full online support, and the head-to-head play is already surprisingly robust. You'll be able to create your own pay-per-view extravaganzas, stringing matches together to your personal liking and bringing them online for other people to try out. If that's not enough of an ego trip, you can even make up your very own championship belt for multiplayer tournaments. Of course, this can backfire on you—if you lose this belt to another player, then it's copied over to his personal record and you'll lose it forever unless you can score a rematch. Cruel.

On the game side of things, the usual gaggle of small adjustments is once again in full force this year. You can choose a fighting style for each wrestler (clean, neutral, or dirty) that allows you to perform cheap shots or become temporarily invincible if you stick to your professed alignment. There's a new challenge mode featuring matches from across the WWE's storied history, and a set of brand-new match types—including a revised bra-and-panties contest—will ensure that you can play out everything you see on TV this season. Except, hopefully, the Diva segments. «

## "TO BE THE MAN...YOU'VE GOT TO BEAT THE MAN!"

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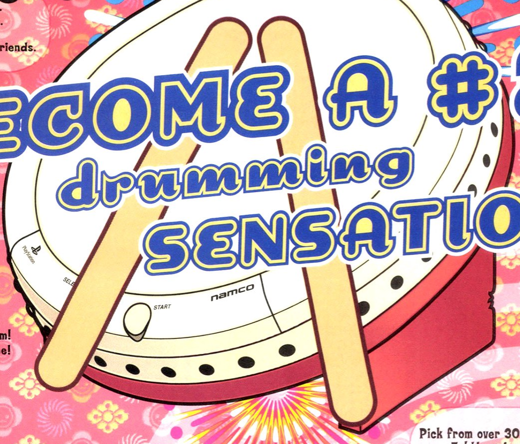
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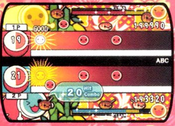
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ABC
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20 Hit Combo
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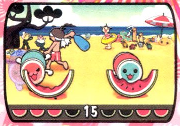

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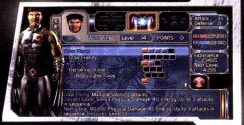
Attack 33
Defense 21
Wolverine
Level 14
POINTS 0
HP 229/280
EP 23/140
Claw Frenzy
Berserker Rage
Unstoppable Rage
Experience
29405
Next Level
41265

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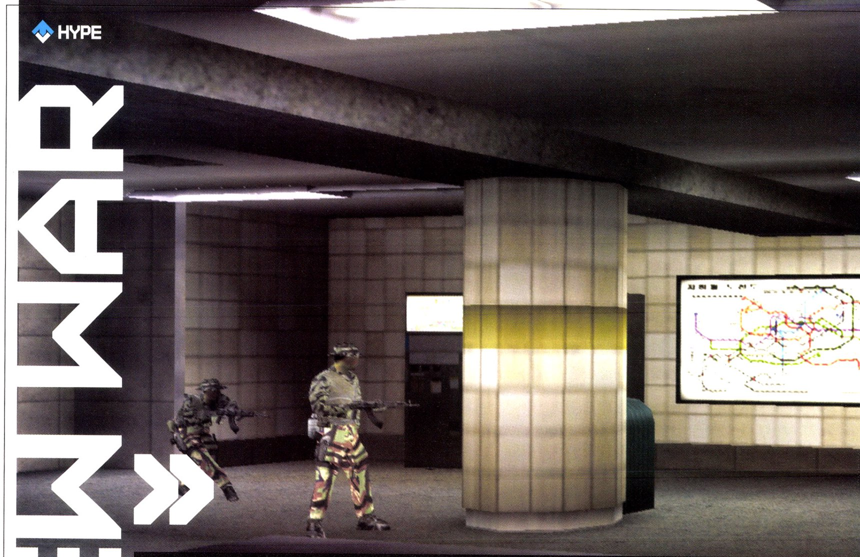


# THE NEW WAR

## FINALLY—THREE NEW MAPS FOR SOCOM II

**The *SOCOM* faithful** are a dedicated breed. More than 100,000 of you get online with *SOCOM II* every day—generally about 30,000 at a time during peak hours. Together you've racked up nearly 100 million player hours online. That's nearly 100 hours for every registered user. You're hardcore.

In fact, you're so hardcore that many of you dropped 100 bucks on a PS2 HDD hard-drive add-on back in February simply because Sony had promised to make new online levels available for *SOCOM II*—even though there was no promise made as to when.

And we know some of you were annoyed to discover that the new levels weren't available right away. And you waited. And waited. And waited. Well, guess what?

The wait is over.

Exactly one month from now, you will have access to the first of three all-new levels. Wondering how you'll get this long-awaited treat? You're holding the delivery method in your hands. That's right, you'll be able to download the first map, After Hours, directly from *OPM*'s December demo disc to your HDD. In fact, this is the only place you'll be able to get the map—at least for a while.

The second map, Liberation, will follow in the January issue, and again, *OPM* will be the only place you'll be able to get the level. The third map, Last Bastion, will arrive in our February issue, and Sony is still investigating additional avenues of distribution for that one.

So what took so long? "We have been focused on making the levels as large and complete as possible," Senior Producer Seth Luisi tells us, "as well as making sure the distribution model is something that will enable consumers to get these levels for free. We feel that these are the best *SOCOM II* maps and we really went all-out on them—which took some time."

When he talks about going all-out, he's not kidding. The levels are noticeably larger and more detailed than any of the current batch of maps. "We've had a lot more time to work on them, to polish them up," Luisi says. "And also, we've learned a lot since we finished *SOCOM II*, so we're able to use a lot of that in creating these maps—different lighting techniques, for example, and ways to make the level fit more efficiently in memory."

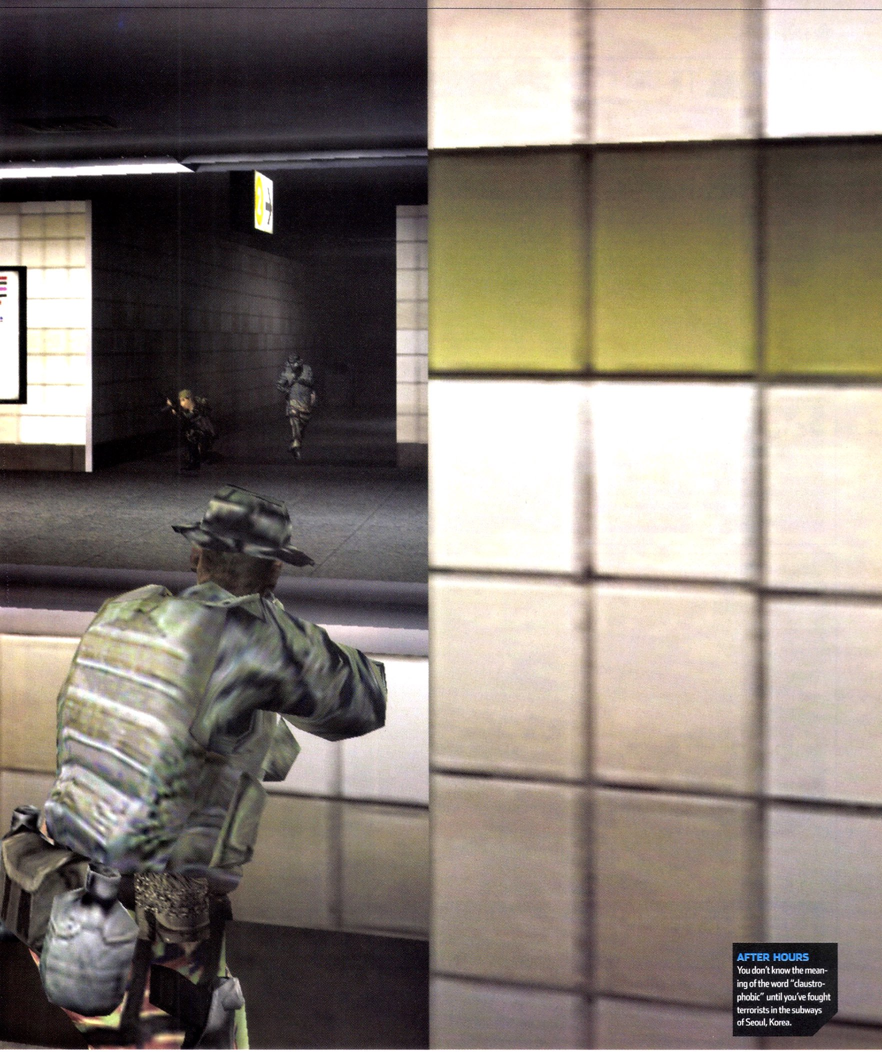
The resultant level of detail is impressive. You'll see colored neon signs reflected off wet city streets, wisps of fog cloaking rugged cliffs, and crowded marketplaces filled with exotic goods. The detail isn't just graphical, though; the layout of each level is also more intricate. We'll go into specifics in the next few pages, but generally speaking, you'll find the levels much more complicated to navigate. The maps have a wide array of pathways, buildings with several stories, and plenty more hiding spots than you might be used to.

This was a conscious decision on the part of the designers. "We figure people have really been playing a lot," Luisi says, "and most of the players are pretty advanced, so we wanted to give them maps that were a lot more advanced—a lot of tactical elements, bigger maps. So all the HDD maps have that hardcore flavor to them."

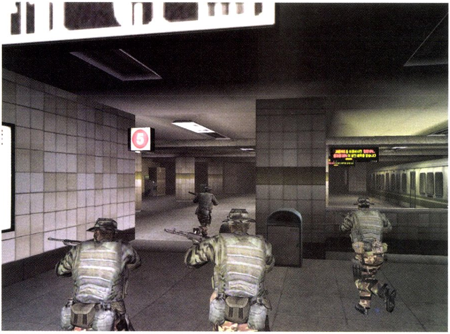
> **"WE WANTED TO GIVE THEM MAPS THAT WERE A LOT MORE ADVANCED."**

But what about players who aren't hardcore enough to buy a hard drive? You may not be totally out of luck: "We are currently evaluating additional ways to get these levels to all *SOCOM II* fans without HDDs," Luisi says. Don't hold your breath, but at least there's still hope.

And you can expect plenty more *SOCOM* to come. There may be more maps beyond these three, for example. While there are currently no definite plans, Luisi says, "You never know. It depends on the consumer reaction to these first three maps." Either way, Zipper and Sony definitely have something up their sleeves. Will it be *SOCOM III*? Luisi is carefully noncommittal: "We're working on something."



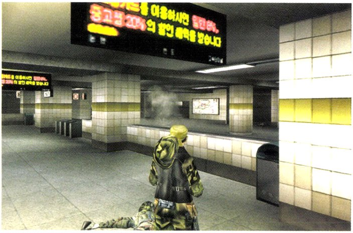
**AFTER HOURS**
You don't know the meaning of the word "claustrophobic" until you've fought terrorists in the subways of Seoul, Korea.

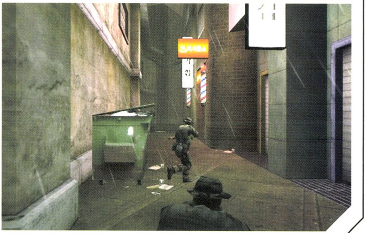


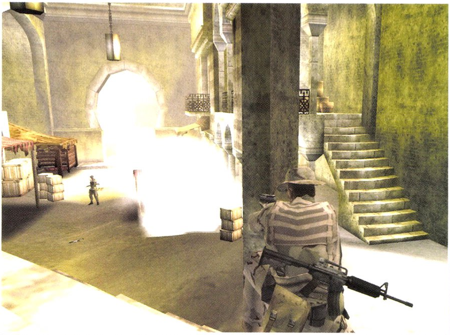
# AFTER HOURS

## DO BATTLE IN THE STREETS OF SEOUL, KOREA

**After Hours** is a suppression map set in a modern metropolis loosely based on a brand-new area of operation: Seoul, Korea. Points of interest include a two-story parking garage, an extensive subway system with five different entrances, and an Internet café with access to the city rooftops. This level was included in the recent Korean release of *SOCOM II*.



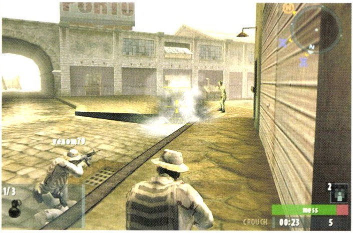


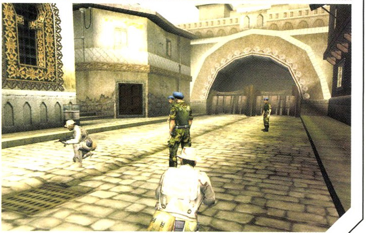


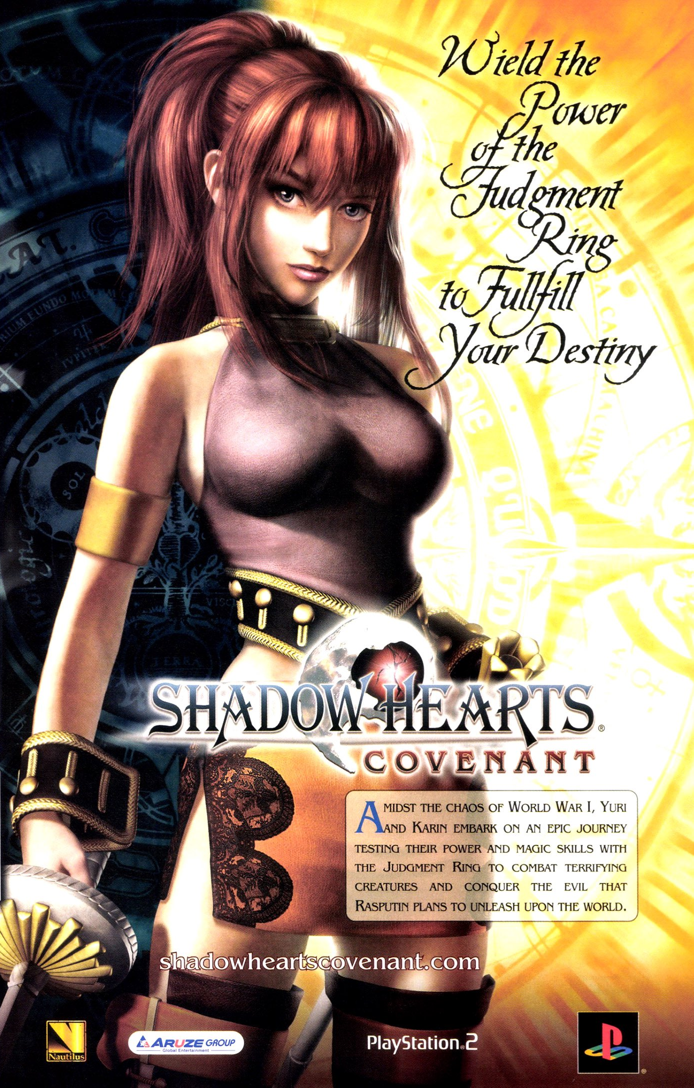
# LIBERATION

## WIND YOUR WAY THROUGH THE BACK ALLEYS OF ALGERIA

**Liberation** is an escort map located in the Algerian area of operation. Set in a port city, it includes narrow, twisting alleys with gates that the terrorists can use to block off the SEALs' escort routes, as well as a large open-air market with multiple levels and plenty of wares to hide behind. This level bears a resemblance to the Guardian Angels mission in single-player mode.



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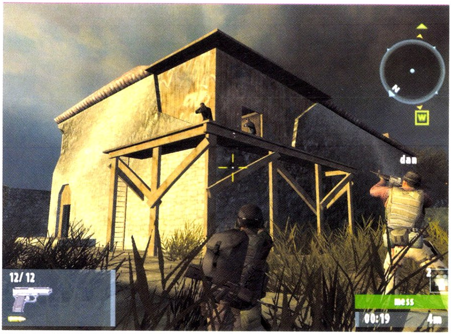
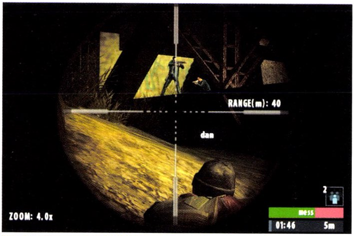




dan
18/30
5 MAGS
mess
03:11

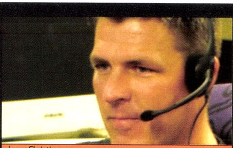
# LAST BASTION

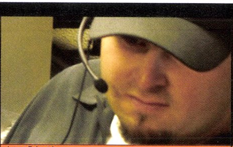
## ALL-OUT ASSAULT IN ALBANIA

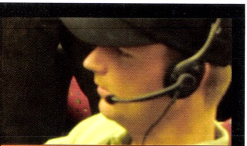
**Last Bastion** is a breach map set in Albania. The terrorists start out encamped in a huge fortress towering over a beach. The SEALs must work their way in through the basement, over a well-defended bridge, or down the beach and through a mess of ground cover that easily hides terrorists and mines. Think Enowapi crossed with Foxhunt crossed with Fish Hook and you'll get the general idea.

# GIANT KILLERS

## FAME HAS ITS PRIVILEGES


Jason Christiansen


Jason Schmidt


A.J. Pierzynski

**"Let's go, green up!"** says JS29 over the lobby channel. "We gonna chat or we gonna play?" Typical talk for the start of a *SOCOM* game. But this isn't a typical *SOCOM* game, and JS29 isn't a typical *SOCOM* player. No, he's not a game designer or a tester or a Hollywood up-and-comer—he's a professional baseball player. JS29 is Jason Schmidt, pitcher for the San Francisco Giants.

Schmidt is not a casual *SOCOM* player; he's hard*core*. Along with his teammates (and clanmates) Jason Christiansen and AJ Pierzynski, Schmidt plays *SOCOM* as often as the average person goes to work. How often? "Dude," he laughs, "we play every day." Every day? What about when the Giants are on the road? "We play *every day*," he insists. "On the road is the best time to play. All the hotels have broadband, and we don't really have anything else to do except go to work." ("Work," in this case, means a major league baseball game.)

Schmidt, Christiansen, and Pierzynski are visiting the Foster City, CA, offices of Sony Computer Entertainment America. Having heard rumors of new levels for their favorite game, they asked Sony for a sneak preview (and we, of course, jumped at the chance to tag along)—never mind the fact that they were due at the ballpark in the early afternoon for the second game in a home series against the Colorado Rockies. These guys know where their priorities are.

"Did you play before last night's game?" we ask Schmidt.

"Yeah," he says as he pulls up his scope and squeezes off a head shot at a full run to win the match. "And I was up playing till 4 a.m. the night before." (Incidentally, the Giants lost that game to the Rockies 8-6—but we're pretty sure those two facts aren't related.)

These three Giants aren't the only players interested in *SOCOM*. Their clan (no, we can't give out its name; and in case you were wondering, JS29 is not Schmidt's real name online) includes fellow Giant Jesse Foppert, as well as members of the Giants' AAA team, the Fresno Grizzlies: Ryan Jensen, Kevin Walker, Jeff Urban, and Lee Gardner. The players use *SOCOM* as a way to unwind after games, to loosen up before games, to stay busy on the road, and to keep in touch in the off-season.

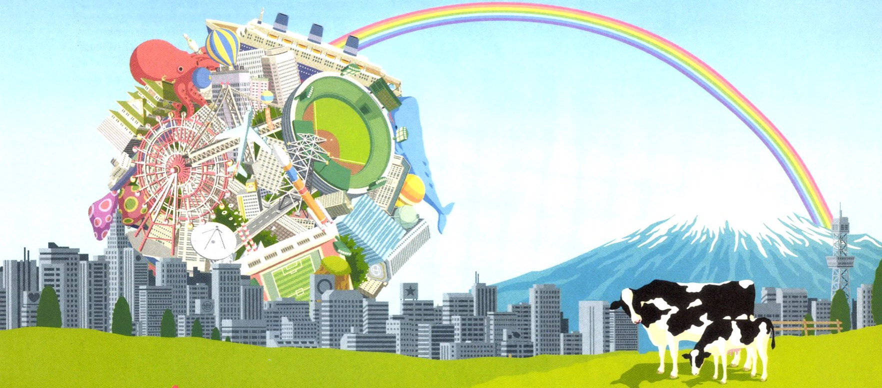
**"ON THE ROAD IS THE BEST TIME TO PLAY."**

How long do they play on average? "Seven hours a day," says Pierzynski. "More in the winter."

"I remember one time last winter," says Christiansen, "I put my daughter to bed at 8:30 and went to bed at 5. 'Cause, you know, all I have to do is show up at spring training to row and run, go to the gym, get done at 2, come home and play for a bit, pick the kid up from school, hang out at home till 8:30, kiss the wife goodnight, go downstairs, and start playing again."

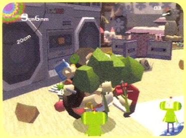
So, what do these hardcore *SOCOM* fanatics think of the new levels? They love them. "You guys hiring?" asks Pierzynski. "Baseball's not really working out for me, you know. About eight hours of this a day, I'd be good to go. My wife already thinks I work for Sony anyway." «

# Katamari
# 塊魂
# Damacy™

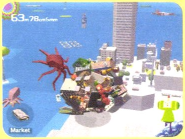


## The rolling, sticking, never-stopping, ever-swelling clump of stuff that makes a star out of everyone and everything.

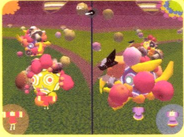
**When the King of All Cosmos accidentally destroys all the stars in the sky, he orders you, his pint-sized princely son, to put the twinkle back in the heavens above. How, you ask? By rolling everything and anything on Earth into clumps, so he can replace what's missing in space.**



Featuring object-collecting gameplay mechanics of mesmerizing simplicity and absurdity.



Go from rolling along a tabletop to ravaging through city streets, picking up momentum and skyscrapers along the way.



Two-player battle mode lets you compete in a race to grow the biggest ball of stuff.

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Mild Fantasy Violence

PlayStation®2

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>
> –IGN.com

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SEGA

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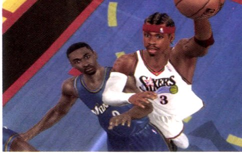

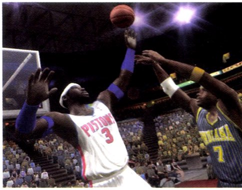

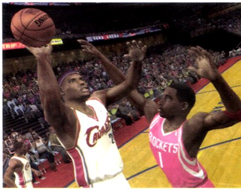

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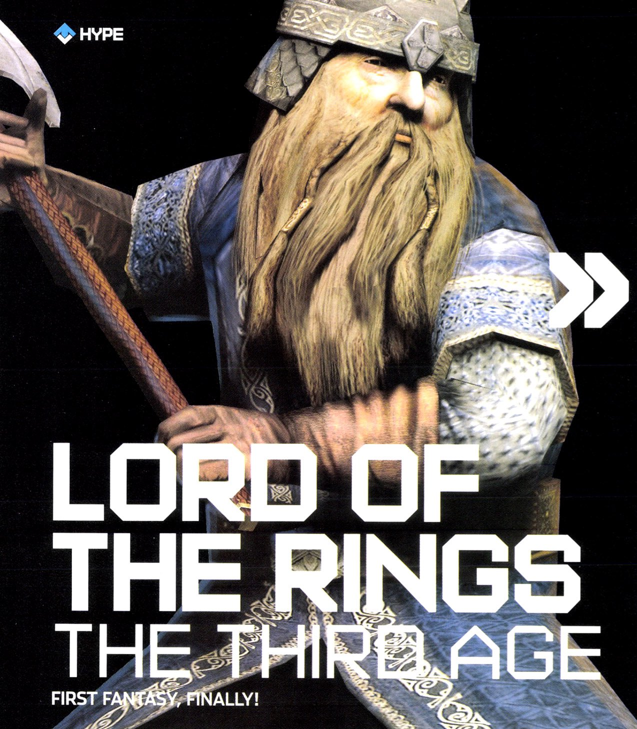


# LORD OF THE RINGS
## THE THIRD AGE

**FIRST FANTASY, FINALLY!**

**It's about time** that the grandfather of RPGs finally gets, well, an RPG. J.R.R. Tolkien's mammoth tome, the inspiration for *Dungeons & Dragons* and practically every other fantasy-based role-playing system, finally becomes an actual RPG for PS2.

Don't assume that this is a turn-based version of the *LOTR* action games that EA already released. While this game follows the plot of the saga, it focuses on new characters whose story parallels that of Frodo and his Fellowship.

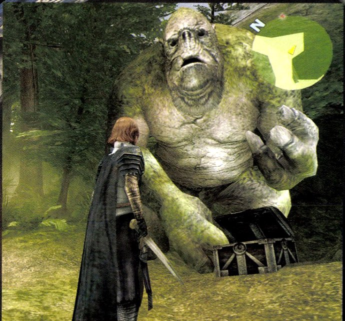
The new characters are all basically rough analogues of known and beloved characters from Tolkien's original story. *The Third Age*'s story starts with Berethor, a Gondorian captain tasked with tracking down Boromir. As he zips around Rivendell, he gets ambushed by some nazgul and is saved by his first party member: Idrial the elf. Along the way, he'll recruit a ranger, a dwarf, a maiden of Rohan, and a Rohirrim outrider. Occasionally, Berethor's party will intercept the Fellowship, and you gain temporary party members like Aragorn, Gandalf (both in White and Grey), and pretty-boy Legolas. Another movie tie-in is that when you finish certain areas, you unlock "stories," which are bits of lore and legend that are narrated by Gandalf himself.

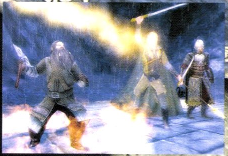
The game plays pretty much like any standard RPG, with your typical turn-based combat system, overworld wandering, and random chest looting. All of this is done in the famous locales highlighted throughout the movie trilogy: Berethor starts in Rivendell and makes his way through Moria, Helm's Deep, and finally to Pelennor Fields.

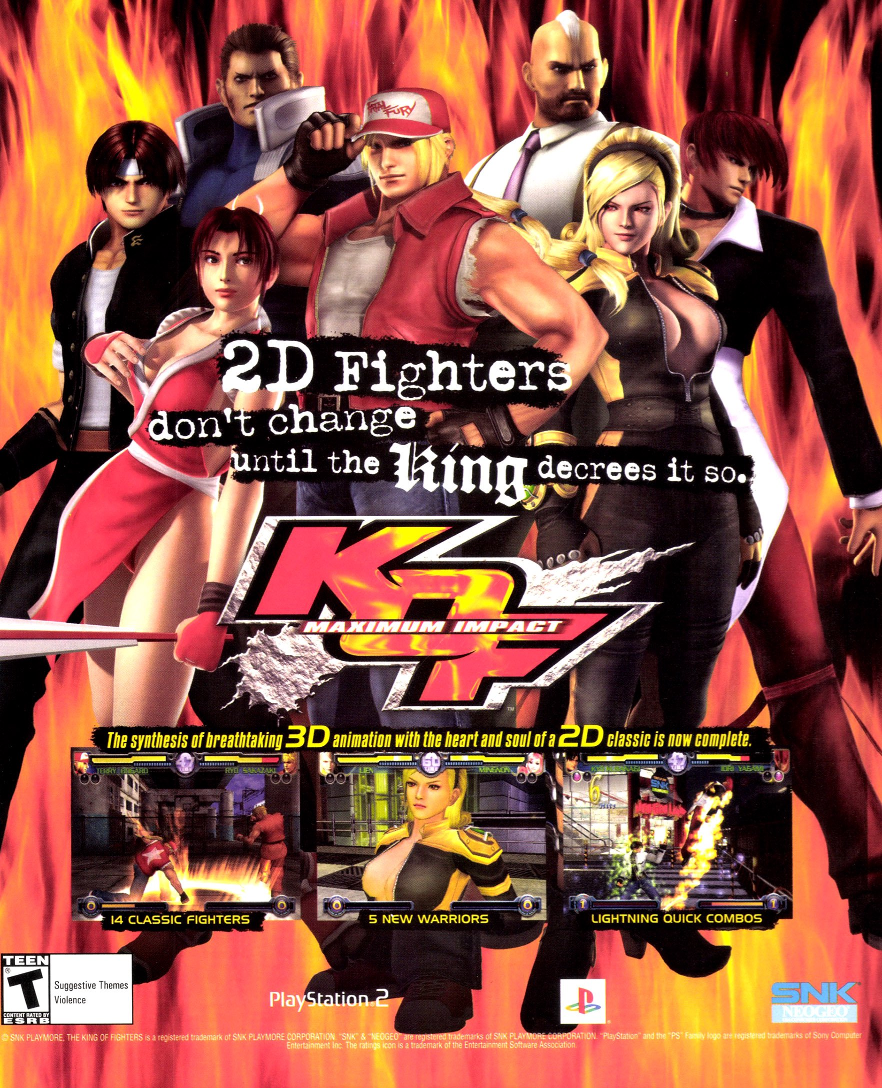
There are a few differences that could possibly save the game from being called a *Final Fantasy* clone with tengwar (Elvish) writing: co-op play and the shadow mode. As you journey through the single-player game, you unlock areas that you can replay in co-op mode, in which you control one half of the party and your pal controls the other half. Similarly, you can replay certain episodes in shadow mode, where you play major battles as the orcs/goblins/whatever baddies you were fighting. Your reward for playing the evil side is unlocking special weapons for the normal characters.

*LOTR, The Third Age* is in a tricky spot, as it's in danger of being dismissed as a combination *FF* knockoff/cheap *LOTR* cash-in. We'll see for sure next month when we review it, but it's worth keeping track of, just to see if EA can make a worthy RPG out of the father of the modern RPG. «

**Pub.** EA Games **Dev.** EA LA **Release** November



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TEEN
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Suggestive Themes
Violence
PlayStation 2
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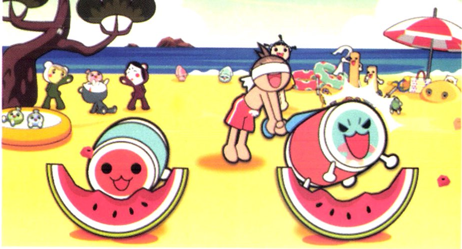
# BEAT IT

## TAIKO: DRUM MASTER IS COMING



**If you saw *Lost in Translation*,** you may remember a scene where Scarlett Johansson's character is wandering through a Tokyo gaming arcade. And if you remember that scene, then you may remember one of the games in the arcade where a guy is banging on a giant drum. That game is *Taiko: Drum Master*. And soon, you'll have the opportunity to play it in the comfort of your own home.

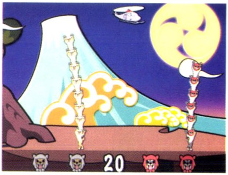
No, you won't get a drum the size of the one that's in the arcade in the movie, but you will get your own small drum controller, complete with a pair of drumsticks. The game allows for two players, but if you don't feel like shelling out the money for a second drum (the game and controller will be packaged together for $60), a Dual Shock controller can also be used.

**HISTORY LESSON**

Taiko, which literally translates as "fat drum," is a drumming style that originated in Japan more than 1,400 years ago.

**OUR FAVORITE HAS YOU STACKING DOGS.**

The main mode is typical of most rhythm games: Perform well enough on each song to pass to the next stage. Namco has signed new music for the American version, so you'll get to keep rhythm with your choice of more than 30 different songs, from Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 (we assume it's not the entire symphony) to Britney Spears' "Toxic."



There's more to do than just keep the beat, though. In addition to the standard bang-along-with-the-song mode, the game also includes three different nonmusical minigames. In one, you must compete to see who can set off the most fireworks while avoiding blowing up bombs. A second pits you in a watermelon-seed-spitting competition. And the third, our favorite, has you stacking up dogs one on top of another in an attempt to reach a helicopter high above.

We had fun beating the crap out of each other, but we must confess (as a bunch of wusses) that our arms were sore after our time with the game. If you're weak like us, you may want to start lifting weights to tone those arms for competition. «

Pub. Namco Dev. Namco Release Holidays

# JAPAN TOWN

## CHEAP IS GOOD

**ANDREW VESTAL** teaches English in the land of our friends to the East, and he thinks there should be more inexpensive, original games.

**In a recent BBC interview,** games giant Electronic Arts claimed next-generation development costs would increase nearly 200 percent. In its vision of the future, smaller companies will perish, while larger companies will continue to rely on established franchises and movie tie-ins. It's "like a forest fire," says Jeff Brown, EA's vice president of corporate communications. "It makes the healthy trees stronger but burns away the weeds." Are consolidation and Hollywoodization inevitable?

America's most popular movies are almost universally Hollywood productions, but a thriving subculture of smaller, independent films exists outside the system. Could low-budget, independent games find a similar niche in the modern industry? In Japan, at least, the answer is yes! Recently, developers of first-run budget titles have positively flourished.

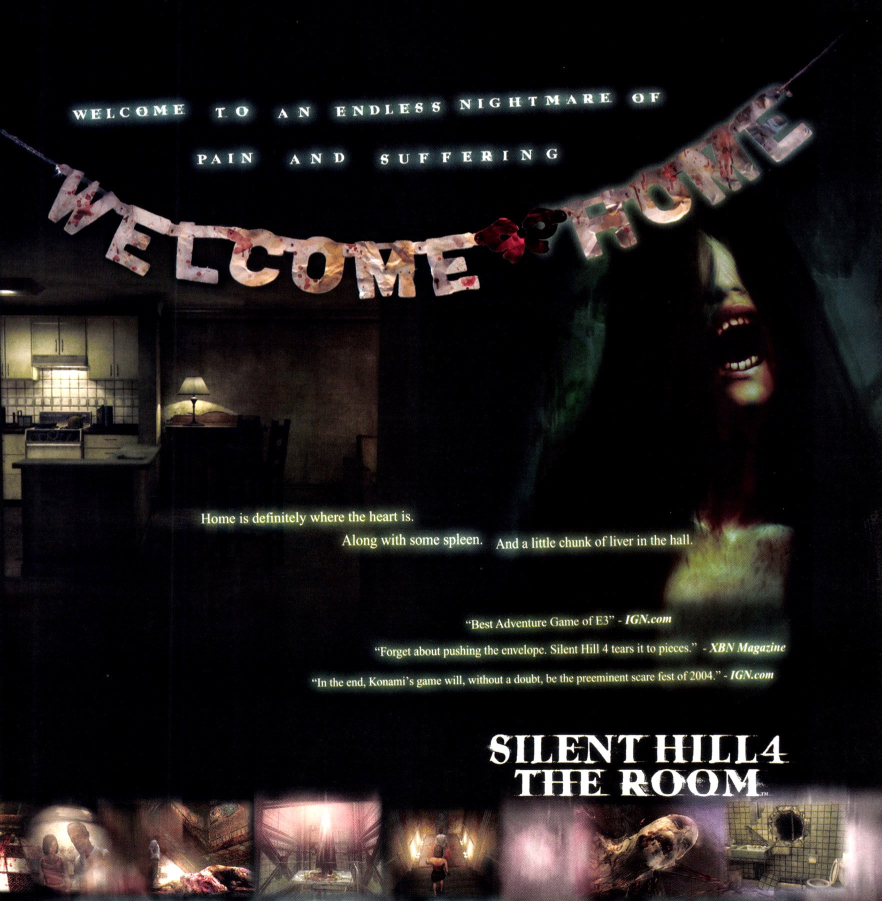
D3 Publishing is unquestionably the most successful of these publishers. Most Japanese publishers are drowning in the red ink of a shrinking economy, but D3's Simple 2000 series has propelled the company to huge profits. Each game in the series sells for only 2,000 yen, about $18. Each game has stark, black packaging and is titled *The [insert title here]*, so players know that games as diverse as *The Block Smash, The 20,000 Question Quiz, The Street Basketball*, and *The Surgeon* are all part of the same series.

Some of these games are good, most are mediocre, but very few are terrible. One of the better titles, *The Earth Defense Force*, took home Game of the Year awards from *Continue*, a very hardcore enthusiast magazine. *The EDF* pits one lone soldier against an endless onslaught of insectoid invaders, alien tripods, Godzilla-esque monsters, and more. The framerate is frequently single digit, and the sprite-based enemies look clumsily pasted into the game. On the other hand, there are dozens of fast-moving enemies, completely destructible cityscapes, vehicles, more than 100 different weapons, and responsive controls. It's a psychotically paced adrenaline rush that lets the player single-handedly destroy the city in order to save the world. And it's 2,000 yen.

Several Simple 2000 games—*The Cameraboy, The Swimsuit Competition, The Catfight*—are based on busty, bouncy, bikini-clad females. These more prurient entries usually have the worst gameplay and the highest sales. The latest one is slightly better, though: *The Onee Chanbara* (roughly, *The Samurai Gal*) stars a cow-print-bikinied beauty katana-slicing through the baddies of 20XX. *Dynasty Warriors*, the Wild West, and sexy babes—all for less than 20 bucks? It's not hard to see why this business plan works.

The most important lesson of the Simple 2000 series is that gamers have a sliding scale of expectations. Charge $50 for a game, and they'll accept nothing less than the best. Give them a new, original game for $20, and they're far more open and forgiving. After years of struggle with Electronic Arts' unstoppable *Madden* juggernaut, Visual Concepts started selling its excellent *ESPN NFL 2K5* at a $20 price point this year. It seems to have worked; more gamers than ever before have given the "other" football series a chance. Even Hollywood glitz and glamour aren't invincible, it seems, if the price is right. «

**GAMERS HAVE A SLIDING SCALE OF EXPECTATIONS FOR GAMES.**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Home is definitely where the heart is.
Along with some spleen. And a little chunk of liver in the hall.

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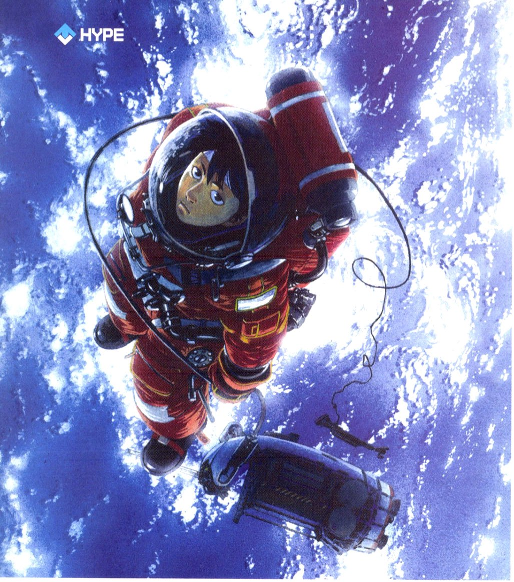

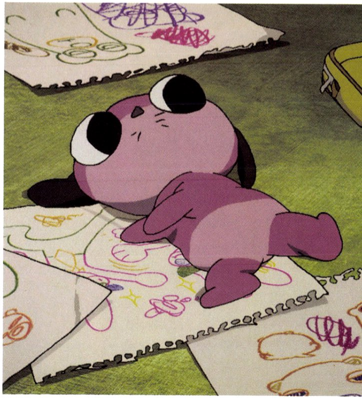

# ANIMANIA

## TOILETS THAT FLUSH, TOYS THAT ARE PLUSH

**HELLO LADIES**
Like hot anime chicks? So do a lot of other people—to meet some of them, go join AnimeBabesClub-club.1up.com and then ogle your little heart out. Yes, you. Go. Now.

### SPACE GARBAGE TRUCKIN'

At the tail end of the convention season, Otakon saw Bandai announce the long-overdue licensing of *Planetes*, one of the best 26-episode TV series of the recent season. It's hard science fiction set late in the current century, chronicling the lives of astronauts working thankless jobs as garbage collectors in low Earth orbit. The tone echoes *Patlabor*'s neat mix of comedy, drama, and near-future action, and the characters are endearing. The TV show won't see release for a while, but Tokyopop's edition of the *Planetes* comic series is one of the publisher's best productions, and three volumes are available now, with a fourth due in November.

### CRUSH THEM, GINREI ROBO

As for things worth buying now, one of this fall's best buys is the even more long-overdue DVD release of *Giant Robo*. Volume one of Yasuhiro Imagawa's balls-out mecha magnum opus finally arrives from Media Blasters on October 26, with several more volumes to follow—the complete collection will include both the seven-episode *Robo* OVA series and the goofy *Ginrei Special* side stories. For pure action, nothing this season comes close.

### OCCUPATION: DEMON KING

One of the other notable acquisitions at Otakon, the fantasy series *Kyou Kara Maou!*, is a bit harder to put a finger on. Imagine a world-hopping fantasy series in the vein of *Fushigi Yuugi* (the hero is flushed down a toilet to a realm where he's hailed as the king of a demon race) but with a pretty-boy cast and a demented sense of humor. When it's not wretchedly failing to deliver compelling fantasy action, it's almost unreasonably funny. Geneon's picked it up for release next year sometime—new additions to its slate also include *Tokyo Underground* and the *Star Ocean EX* TV series (which is only hauntingly reminiscent of the videogames bearing the same name).

### WHO IS MAROMI-CHAN?

In one of the more inspired bits of promotional whatsis to come from an American anime company recently, the special edition of Geneon's first *Paranoia Agent* volume will come with a plush Maromi-chan. It makes sense if you've seen the show—the protagonist designs random cute mascot characters, and this pink floppy-eared thing is her biggest success. If pink floppy-eared things float your boat, shell out the extra $10 on October 26.

### FAVORITES ON THE CHEAP

Game publishers have been selling "greatest hits" rereleases for a decade or more, and the anime business is catching on to the idea. The latest publisher to pull them out is ADV Films—this fall will see several "Essential Anime" releases collecting 26-episode TV series into three $20 volumes. The first *Martian Successor Nadesico* volume hits on September 28, and even *Bubblegum Crisis: Tokyo 2040* might be a good buy at that price.

### HIT THE ROAD, JACK

The revival of Osamu Tezuka's classic characters continues in Japan this fall. Nippon TV plans to begin a new *Black Jack* TV series on October 11, featuring the directing talents of Tezuka's son Makoto. Jack is one of Tezuka's later '70s-vintage characters, a scarred surgeon with inhuman skills who wanders the world covertly employing his medical talents. OVAs starring the character have seen release in America, but they've been mostly subpar efforts—hopefully this new series will do the source material justice. « *Dave Smith*

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# BY THE NUMBERS

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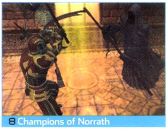
## PS2 TOP 20 SALES

We couldn't agree with you more—John Madden is one fine specimen of deliciousness. Ummmmm, we mean, football is AWESOME and people who play it are manly! Yaaaaaaaaaaaargh!

**He doesn't look quite ready for some football.**

| | Title (Publisher) | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Madden NFL 2005 (EA Sports) | ●●●●◖ |
| 2 | Madden NFL 2005 Collector's Edition (EA Sports) | Not Rated |
| 3 | ESPN NFL 2K5 (ESPN Videogames) | ●●●●◖ |
| 4 | Hot Shots Golf Fore! (Sony CEA) | ●●●◖ |
| 5 | Spider-Man 2 (Activision) | ●●●◖ |
| 6 | NCAA Football 2005 (EA Sports) | ●●●●◖ |
| 7 | DDRMAX 2 (Konami) | ●●●● |
| 8 | Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest (SOE) | ●●●●◖ |
| 9 | DRIV3R (Atari) | ●●●◖ |
| 10 | Athens 2004 (Sony CEA) | ●●◖ |
| 11 | DDRMAX (Konami) | ●●●● |
| 12 | Mega Man Anniversary Collection (Capcom) | ●●●◖ |
| 13 | Viewtiful Joe (Capcom) | ●●●●◖ |
| 14 | R: Racing Evolution (Namco) | ●●●● |
| 15 | Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses (Konami) | ●●●●◖ |
| 16 | Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm (Ubisoft) | ●●●◖ |
| 17 | ESPN NHL 2K5 (ESPN Videogames) | ●●◖ |
| 18 | Soul Calibur II (Namco) | ●●●●● |
| 19 | Way of the Samurai 2 (Capcom) | ●●● |
| 20 | FIFA Soccer 2004 (EA Sports) | ●●●●● |

4 Hot Shots Golf Fore!



8 Champions of Norrath

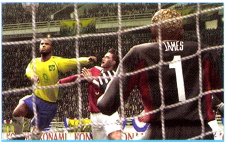
13 Viewtiful Joe

17 ESPN NHL 2K5

Source: EB Games, August 2004. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff. Snake Pit sources: Animalplanet.com, Texsnakeman.com.

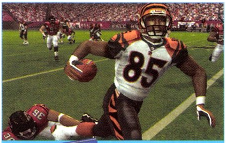
## PS1 TOP 10 SALES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Final Fantasy VII | Square Enix |
| 2 | Final Fantasy Anthology | Square Enix |
| 3 | Final Fantasy Chronicles | Square Enix |
| 4 | Final Fantasy Origins | Square Enix |
| 5 | Final Fantasy VIII | Square Enix |
| 6 | Final Fantasy Tactics | Square Enix |
| 7 | Final Fantasy IX | Square Enix |
| 8 | Namco Museum Vol. 3 | Namco |
| 9 | Hellboy: Asylum Seeker | DreamCatcher |
| 10 | Soul Blade | Namco |



## JAPAN'S TOP 10 PS2 GAMES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Winning Eleven 8 | Konami |
| 2 | Suikoden IV | Konami |
| 3 | Powerful Pro Baseball 11 | Konami |
| 4 | One Piece: Round the Land | Bandai |
| 5 | Pachi-slot Hokuto no Ken | Sammy |
| 6 | KOF Maximum Impact | SNK Playmore |
| 7 | Taiko no Tatsujin 4 | Namco |
| 8 | The Nightmare of Druaga | Arika |
| 9 | Guilty Gear Isuka | Sammy |
| 10 | Tenchu Kurenai | From Software |



## TOP 10 BLOCKBUSTER RENTALS

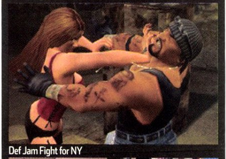
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Madden NFL 2005 (PS2) | EA Sports |
| 2 | Madden NFL 2005 (XB) | EA Sports |
| 3 | DRIV3R (PS2) | Atari |
| 4 | Spider-Man 2 (PS2) | Activision |
| 5 | Tom Clancy's R63: Black Arrow (XB) | Ubisoft |
| 6 | ESPN NFL 2K5 (PS2) | ESPN VG |
| 7 | Hot Shots Golf Fore! (PS2) | Sony CEA |
| 8 | Test Drive: Eve of Destruction (PS2) | Atari |
| 9 | NCAA Football 2005 (PS2) | EA Sports |
| 10 | Red Dead Revolver (PS2) | Rockstar- |

## TOP 10 SALES, ALL SYSTEMS

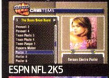
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Madden NFL 2005 (PS2) | EA Sports |
| 2 | Madden NFL 2005 (XB) | EA Sports |
| 3 | Doom 3 (PC) | Activision |
| 4 | Madden NFL 2005 Coll. Ed. (PS2) | EA Sports |
| 5 | ESPN NFL 2K5 (PS2) | ESPN VG |
| 6 | ESPN NFL 2K5 (XB) | ESPN VG |
| 7 | Tom Clancy's R63: Black Arrow (XB) | Ubisoft |
| 8 | Madden NFL 2005 (GC) | EA Sports |
| 9 | Tales of Symphonia (GC) | Namco |
| 10 | Halo (XB) | Microsoft |

## TREND SPOTTER

A girl has to have money to eat—or pay for those breast implants. Which may explain why Carmen Electra has been...ummmm...popping up all over gaming as of late.



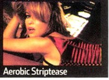
Def Jam Fight for NY



ESPN NFL 2K5

Playboy: The Mansion

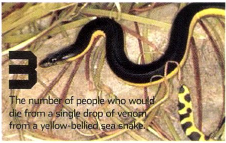
GPhoria



Aerobic Striptease

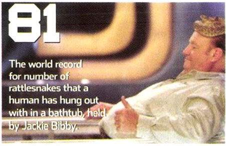
## SNAKE PIT

Data about our friends the serpents.



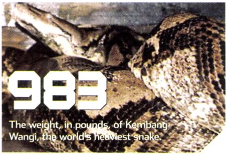
**3**

The number of people who would die from a single drop of venom from a yellow-bellied sea snake.



**81**

The world record for number of rattlesnakes that a human has hung out with in a bathtub, held by Jackie Bibby.



**983**

The weight, in pounds, of Kembang Wangi, the world's heaviest snake.

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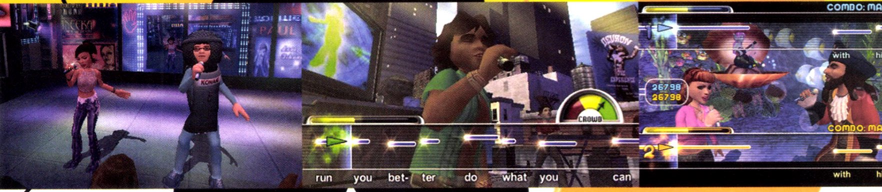

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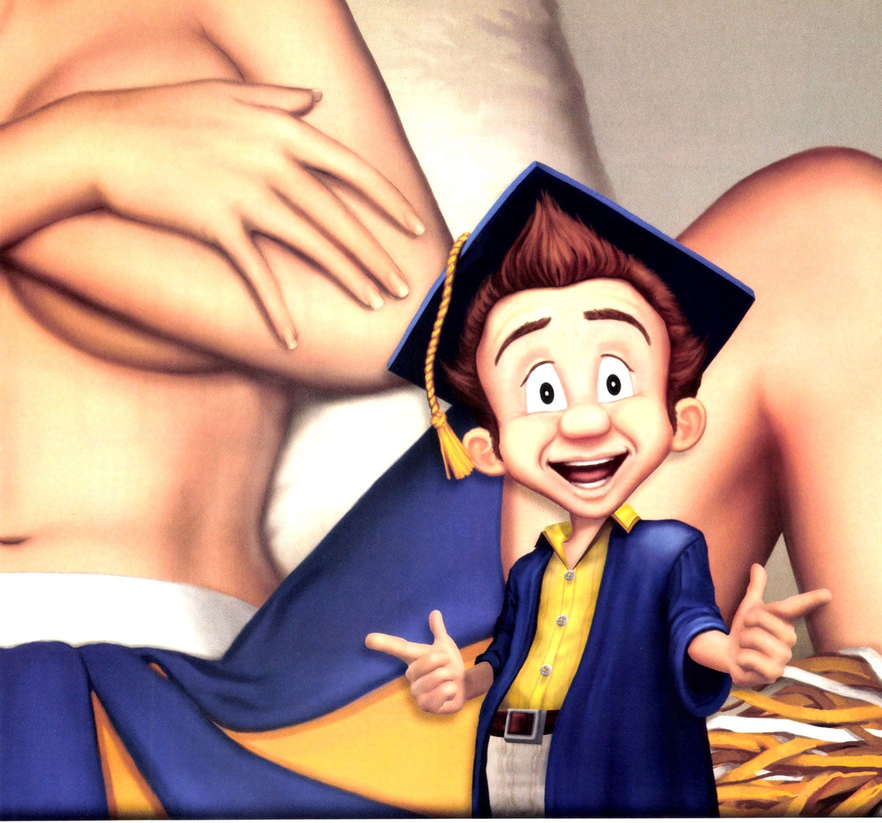

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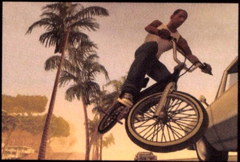

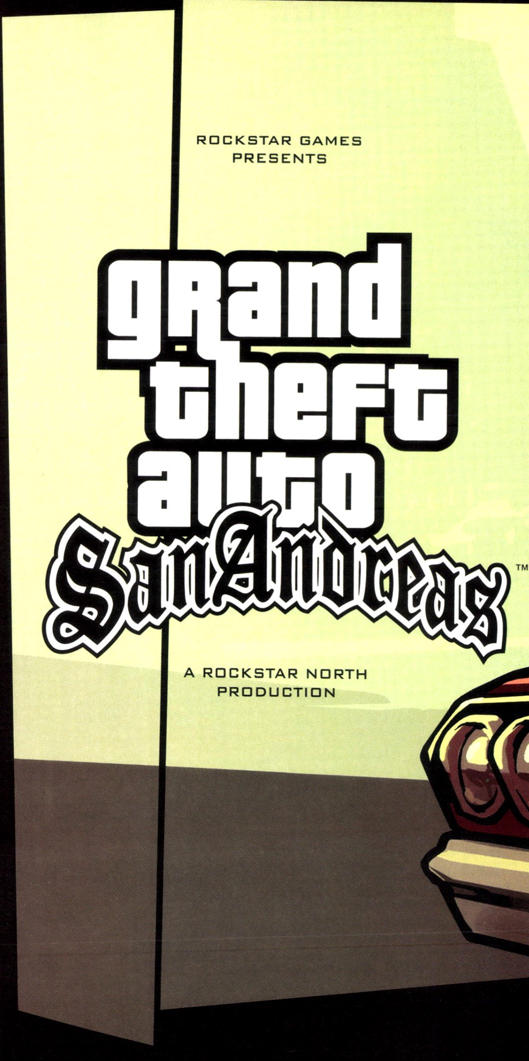

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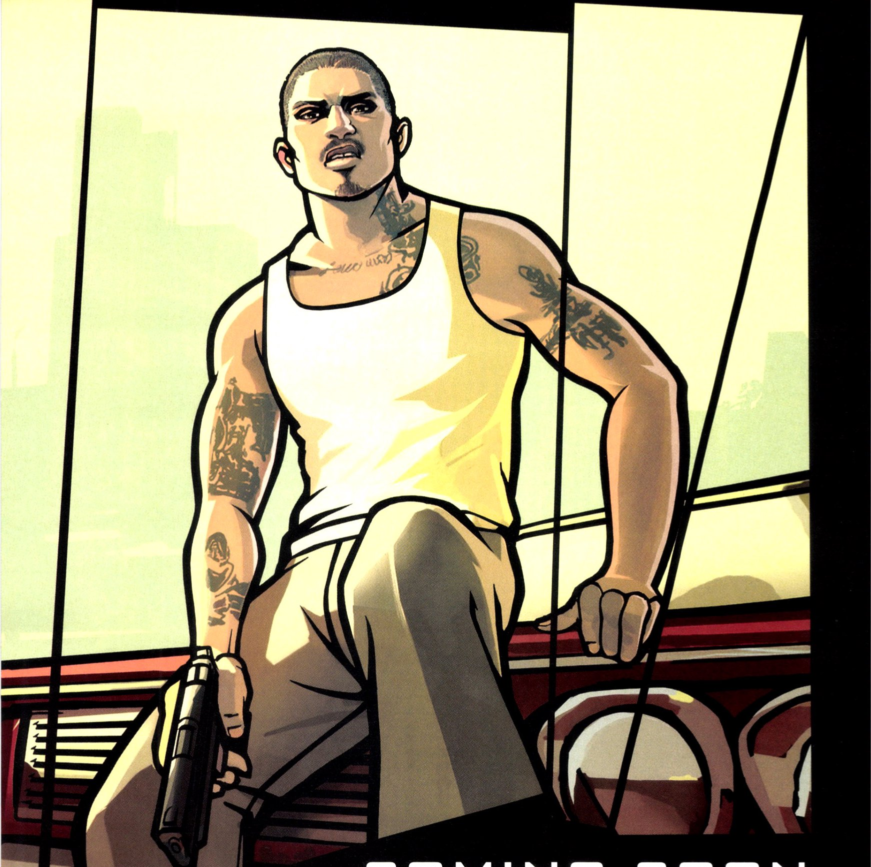

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# KING ARTHUR

TEEN

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Violence

BRING HOME THE LEGEND
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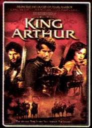

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# MGS3

**May 1, 1960:** Gary Powers' U2 spy plane is shot down over Russian airspace.
**October 22, 1962:** President John F. Kennedy announces that Russia is building missile installations in Cuba and imposes a naval blockade in Cuban waters.
**August 24, 1964:** The United States sends a covert operative into Tselinoyarsk, Russia, in order to extract a Soviet scientist wishing to defect. The scientist is Dr. Sokolov, and the operative sent in is code-named Naked Snake.

**This is the setup** for *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*. The latest installment of Hideo Kojima's beloved *Metal Gear* franchise is a revelation of secret history. Just as he reveals the secret power that the Patriots wield over the modern populace in *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*, so does he disclose the secret of how close the U.S. and Russia came to nuclear armageddon at the hands of a rogue colonel in *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

The simple extraction operation that quickly spirals into a massive crisis serves as the prologue to *MGS3*...this prologue is the mission that's on your demo disc.

by THIERRY NGUYEN

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